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Nick Carter Stories

THE PURPLE SPOT
OR
NICK CARTER'S ~ THREE VISITORS

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NICK CARTER STORIES

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No. 31. NEW YORK, April 12, 1913. **Price Five Cents.**

THE PURPLE SPOT;

Or, NICK CARTER'S THREE VISITORS.

Edited by CHICKERING CARTER.

CHAPTER I.

THE SYMBOL OF VENGEANCE.

"There is one man in this city, Nick Carter, whom I want you to get."

The speaker was a well-known and prominent person—Judge Amos Langley, of the court of appeals.

The scene was Nick Carter's library, in his Madison Avenue residence, and the time was about eight o'clock one evening in April.

Judge Langley had found Nick alone and unoccupied, when ushered in by the detective's servant, and, after a cordial greeting while taking the chair placed for him, he at once introduced his business with the above significant statement.

Nick Carter needed only a glance at his visitor's face, in fact, to realize that his mission was not an ordinary one.

"A man you want me to get?" he echoed inquiringly.

"Yes."

"Who is the man?"

"I don't know."

"Where can he be found?"

"That is for you to discover."

"Don't you know his name?"

"He has as many names, Nick, as hairs in his head," Judge Langley gravely declared. "That is to say, I have been so informed."

"By whom?" Nick inquired. "Why don't you appeal to the police, instead of me?"

"Because, in my opinion, you are the only man who can accomplish the task, who can ferret out the hiding place of this obscure and most elusive scoundrel, who——"

"Nonsense!" Nick exclaimed, interrupting. "Don't jolly me with any such flattery as that."

"I do not flatter you. I mean just what I say," Judge Langley insisted. "Let me tell you what little I know about this matter."

"I'm all ears, judge."

"Somewhere in this city, Nick," Judge Langley proceeded even more gravely, "there dwells a man whose genius for crime is said to be phenomenal, who is a past master of knavish arts, and whose evil influence reaches into every corner of this community. I have suspected something of the kind for quite a long time."

"Indeed?" queried Nick. "For what reason?"

"Because in numerous cases that have come under my observation as a judge in the court of appeals, cases involving crimes of the most diverse character, I have frequently detected the master mind of this misdirected genius."

"Were they crimes in which he personally figured?" Nick asked, more deeply impressed with his visitor's gravity.

"No, not as an active participant," Judge Langley replied. "But they were crimes that could have had origin only in a remarkably inventive and fertile brain, crimes of extraordinary conception, evincing craft and cunning of the most dangerous kind. Men of your vocation and mind, Nick, are quick to detect such distinctive features, and I soon was compelled to believe that all of these crimes had had inception in the mind of the same individual, that of some evil genius, who, finding personal safety in obscurity, was leaving to others the execution of his knavish designs. I to-day have learned that I was right, that he seldom takes an active part in his felonious schemes, unless emergencies arise that threaten to pervert his designs, or jeopardize the liberty and lives of his subordinates."

"Subordinates?"

"I think that is the proper word," bowed Langley. "For

he is said to govern and direct with an iron will a small army of hirelings and confederates of one kind or another, crooks of far less ability than his own, who look up to him as to one of superior genius, who stand in awe of his malevolent power, and who are bound to him with terrible oaths and compacts, the violation of which spells quick and certain death."

"Dear me!" Nick said incredulously. "Have we gone back to the Middle Ages? I do not believe, Langley, that any such person lives and thrives upon knavery of that description in the city of New York."

"We differ, then," said Judge Langley. "I do believe it."

"You are in a better position, perhaps, to be the first to acquire information warranting such a belief," said Nick. "I think I should have heard something, however, about so accomplished and powerful a knave."

"It is because he is so accomplished and powerful that you have not heard of him," Langley pointedly answered.

"Possibly."

"He keeps himself in the background. Even those who are closest to him do not know him by name, save an alias, nor when or where he could be found at any given time. Most of them, in fact, do not know one another. He governs and directs them by means of secret signs, symbols, and mysterious passwords. He has in every quarter of the city secret resorts and places for refuge, or for conference with any of his vast gang whom he may wish to immediately employ. He is like a spider lurking in the dark recesses of a web, the fine-spun threads of which radiate in every direction, and the slightest quiver of which he instantly detects and rightly interprets."

"I admit the possibility of all this, Langley, yet it seems highly improbable," replied the detective.

"I tell you, Nick, this man is not a myth," Judge Langley again insisted. "He is the most terrible menace existing to-day in this city. He is not a low-bred, ordinary schemer, content with a single knavery that shows him a handsome profit. He is, on the contrary, a man of superior birth and profound learning, versed in the sciences, skilled in mechanics and the practical arts, all of which the criminal trait predominating in his nature has turned to their worst uses."

"Evidently, Langley, if what you say is true."

"He is never idle," Judge Langley proceeded. "He is constantly engaged in planning and directing numerous crimes. He has secret agents wherever he discovers a promising field for his infamous work. He inveigles into the meshes of his terrible web the servants of the wealthy, their maids, their butlers, or valets, and he then works upon their avarice or their fears until they consent to become his confederates. He employs them to coöperate with him, to dig up family skeletons, to secretly seek letters or papers of a compromising nature, or to serve him in any treacherous way of which he can take advantage. They become spies upon those by whom they are trusted. They stoop to any crime this master knave directs. They live in constant fear of him, awed by their heinous compacts with him, the oaths he has imposed, and examples of the swift and terrible vengeance that follows any violation of them."

"Example?" Nick inquired, interrupting. "Do you mean, Judge Langley, that you have positive knowledge of a case of that kind?"

"Yes. That is why I have called on you to-night, and why I insist that this knave must be found, and that you are the man who must find him."

"Explain." Nick drew up in his chair and his knitting brows evinced his more serious attention. "What do you mean, Judge Langley, by an example of this man's swift and certain vengeance?"

"Precisely what I say," Langley gravely answered. "The information I have been imparting, Nick, came to me through the death of two of his victims. One of them was a man found dead in the lavatory of an East Side saloon last September. He was a man of bad character, who was known to have been engaged in several crimes, and to the part he had played in one of them his death undoubtedly was due."

"I remember the case," Nick nodded. "His name was Jasper Ruggles."

"The same," bowed Judge Langley. "The evidence plainly indicated that Jasper Ruggles was murdered. He was struck down from behind while washing his face and hands. His skull was fractured, and he was dead when discovered. One peculiar feature of the case, Nick, led to the discovery, arrest, and conviction of his assassin," Langley went on. "The victim's face had been dried with a towel, and on his forehead between his brows and directly above the apex of his nose was a curious mark that could not possibly have been caused by the assault, though obviously the work of his assailant. It was a round purple spot, as if the tip of a finger dipped in indelible ink had been pressed on the victim's forehead."

"The purple spot," Nick remarked, with a nod. "I remember the circumstances perfectly, though I had no active part in the case. It was the purple spot, I believe, that established the identity of the murderer."

"Yes."

"He was convicted on the strength of the finger mark, I believe."

"Together with other evidence and incriminating circumstances. His name was Martin Foley."

"I knew him," Nick put in. "He was a professional crook. His photograph is in my collection."

"There is no question as to the disreputable character of both men," Judge Langley replied. "Both were lawless members of society. At one o'clock this morning, Nick, Martin Foley was electrocuted for his crime."

"So the evening papers stated."

"His case came up to the court of appeals on exceptions, but decision of the lower court was confirmed, and Martin Foley went to the chair," Langley went on. "At noon to-day I was visited by his chief counsel in the recent trial, James Herrick, the noted criminal lawyer."

"Well?"

"Herrick came to see me because I was familiar with all of the evidence in the case. He wanted my advice."

"About what?"

"Martin Foley left a confession. The statement was confided to Herrick with instructions not to publish it, but to use it as best he could for bringing to justice the man whom Foley regarded as the cause of his death. He was the knave of whom we have been speaking."

"Did Foley confess his guilt?"

"Yes."

"His statement contains, I infer, the information you have been imparting?"

"Most of it."

"Anything more?"

"No." Judge Langley shook his head. "Foley could not, or so Herrick asserts, supply any other, or any more definite, information concerning this man. Both he and Jasper Ruggles, nevertheless, had been involved with him in several crimes. It was because of treachery on Ruggles' part, or some violation of his compact with the other two, that he was brutally murdered."

"But like crimes are committed nearly every day," said Nick. "Why does that murder particularly serve as an example to terrorize and intimidate others who are involved with this alleged master knave in his criminal undertakings?"

"That's where the purple spot comes in."

"The purple spot?" Nick echoed inquiringly. "What is the significance of it?"

"It is the symbol of vengeance. It is the mark placed by this arch rascal on the brow of every wretched creature who, guilty of treachery, has become the victim of his vengeful punishment."

"Are there other cases?"

"Yes. There was a case in Connecticut two years ago; another in Yonkers only three weeks later. The cause of death in both cases was drowning. One was ascribed to suicide, the other to accident."

"Erroneously, I infer."

"Yes," said Langley impressively. "Martin Foley knew better. Every confederate of the knave we have been discussing also knows better. For the brow of each body bore the same tragic, telltale mark, the stamp of treachery, the symbol of vengeance—the deadly purple spot."

"H'm, is that so?" Nick said thoughtfully. "Three such circumstances must have, as you say, some significance. Have the police ever been told that such a rascal is at work in this city?"

"I think not," said Judge Langley. "These facts, for I am convinced that they are facts, were not known until Foley's confession brought them to light. You are one of the first to be informed."

"And what action do you want me to take in this matter?"

"Whatever you think best. I leave it to you."

"Very well, Langley," said Nick, after a moment. "I will consider the matter, and see what I can pick up in other quarters. I will do all I can to round up the rascal."

Judge Langley prepared to go, and Nick arose and accompanied him to the door. Returning to his library, he resumed his seat at his desk and fell to thinking of what he had heard. He wondered whether there really was anything in it, whether such an accomplished knave really was at work in the city, and where he most likely could be found.

Half an hour passed and Nick still was absorbed in thought. The evening quietude in the office was unbroken. Presently he heard one of his assistants, the familiar tread of Patsy Garvan on the front steps, and the opening of the front door. Then came the rush of hurried feet, sounds of a brief struggle near the door, and then a stranger, white with excitement, came plunging through the hall and into the detective's office.

CHAPTER II.

A CRAFTY RASCAL.

The man who had entered Nick Carter's library in the precipitous manner described was in some respects a striking person. He appeared to be about forty years old, a man of medium height, with an erect, compact figure, denoting great muscular strength. He was well dressed, and wore a long, loose raincoat. His face was smoothly shaved and quite impressive. His thick brown hair was brushed straight back over a high, intellectual brow that bulged like a battlement over a pair of deep-set, penetrating gray eyes. His features were clean cut, his nose straight, his jaw square, his mouth broad, with thin lips, and a chin aggressively firm. It was a face capable of wide variety of expression, either good or bad, and a face not easily read.

Despite his precipitous entrance, however, he did not look like a madman. The only symptoms of mental disturbance were his exceeding haste, a nervous trembling of his hands, a look of appeal in his eyes, and the jerky, impetuous phrases with which he endeavored to explain his intrusion.

"Dear me, I'm in such a mess, such a dilemma—do help me out," he cried, while Nick stood gazing at him and Patsy paused at the library door.

"Dilemma—what kind of a dilemma?" Nick demanded, a bit sharply. "Are you in the habit of entering strange houses in this unceremonious fashion?"

"No, no, and I hope you will excuse me. I owe you a thousand apologies, Mr. Carter, and I make them all at once," cried the intruder, with repeated apprehensive glances at the windows and door.

"The fact is, sir," he plunged on, "I am terribly alarmed, dreadfully nervous. I am pursued by a crank, or a madman, I don't know which. I fear for my life. Don't let him come in. If he discovers me again, he may attempt to kill me, or——"

"Keep an eye on the front door, Patsy," said Nick, interrupting. "There may be something doing."

He was a little impressed by the stranger's startling statements, his manifest nervousness and excitement. He strode to one of the screened windows and looked out, while speaking, and Patsy darted through the hall and peered from the front door.

As quick as a flash, with a mometary fiery gleam leaping up in his eyes, the stranger drew a small parcel from his raincoat pocket and thrust it under an accumulation of crumpled papers in the wastebasket under the detective's office table. Then he straightened up and cried, just as Nick turned from the window:

"I know you will think me a fool, Mr. Carter, and I may have done wrong. But I'm of a nervous temperament, and was greatly alarmed. I'm a stranger to you, sir, but—— Ah, if you will allow me, here is my card. I can explain my intrusion, I hope, to your entire satisfaction."

Nick glanced at the card tendered him with eager, tremulous hands. It was neatly engraved:

Gustave Rogler, M. D., B. S., F. R. S.

"I am, as you see, a physician, and a bachelor of science. I have diplomas in both professions, and the degrees of two German universities. I am also a fellow of the Royal Society, London, though ten years have passed since I left England. I reside in Lexington Avenue," he men-

tioned the number, "where I have a laboratory and devote myself to scientific studies and experimental work."

"But what is the occasion for your excitement, Mr. Rogler?" Nick inquired. "Whom and what do you fear?"

"That madman who—nay, I'll begin at the beginning."

"Do so."

"While walking down Madison Avenue about twenty minutes ago," Rogler hurriedly proceeded, "I was approached, about five blocks above here, by a man evidently in great excitement. He accused me of having a package of letters stolen from him, or from his house, and turned over to me by the thief."

"You knew nothing about them?"

"No, no; on my word!" Rogler excitedly protested. "I was utterly nonplused and greatly alarmed, for the man was exceedingly violent. I have seen no letters. I have none on my person. You may search me—as I would willingly have let him do, had he been less violent. I tried to explain, to convince him that I knew nothing about the letters, but he would not hear me. His angry accusations drew a great crowd of men around us. I had their sympathy. They knew I was innocent. Some of them separated us, thrusting my assailant to one side, and I was able to escape and hurry away."

"Did you know the man?" Nick inquired, after listening attentively.

"I did not, Mr. Carter. He was a total stranger to me."

"He evidently made a mistake."

"Yes, yes, to be sure, an awful blunder," Rogler quickly cried, with emphatic gesticulations. "But that did not mend matters, nor relieve me of my fears. I ran away as fast as I could, Mr. Carter, and thought I had eluded him. I quite lost my breath in my haste and excitement."

"So I observe," Nick put in, a bit dryly.

"What was my dismay, moreover, just as I was approaching this block," Rogler nervously added, "I caught sight of the man hastening after me."

"So he was persistent, then?"

"I was not sure that he saw me. I knew only that I could not again go through such a scene, such an encounter. I ran this way, tried in vain to discover a policeman, and I suddenly remembered that you dwelt in this house. I saw a young man entering, and I impulsively rushed in after him, determined to seek your protection and beg you to arrest the madman, if he followed me in here. I hope you will pardon me. I hope——"

Then came an interruption—the furious ringing of the detective's doorbell.

Rogler's verbal flood ended as if he had been suddenly tongue-tied. A look of abject terror appeared on his face. He glanced around, like a cornered rat seeking some avenue of escape, at the same time gasping frantically:

"It's he—it must be he! Don't let him in! Don't let him——"

"Keep quiet," Nick commanded, interrupting. "Don't wait for Joseph, Patsy. See who's at the door. Step across the hall, Mr. Rogler, and wait in the reception room. I'll see this man, if it's he, and will very soon settle this matter for you."

"Thank you—ten thousand thanks!" Rogler nervously gasped, while he hurried out of the library and shut himself in the reception room.

Nick Carter was inclined to laugh at his visitor's fears, which the circumstances hardly seemed to warrant. He waited in the library until Patsy, returning through the hall, entered in company with the man who had rung.

He was a tall, handsome man, in the thirties, scrupulously well dressed, and having all the indications of a gentleman of wealth and culture. He appeared somewhat excited, however, and there was an ugly gleam in his dark, expressive eyes.

Nick knew him by sight and reputation—one Joseph Canfield, a bachelor of means, a popular clubman, a dabbler in stocks, and one of those uncertain individuals commonly described as a man about town.

"Well, well, what's wrong with you, Mr. Canfield, that you ring my bell in that fashion?" said Nick, while Patsy stepped back and closed the office door.

Canfield curbed his excitement, and forced a faint smile to his pale, attractive face.

"I did ring it rudely, Mr. Carter, I confess," he replied, taking a chair to which Nick waved him. "I was in haste to see you, however; great haste, and I scarce could contain my feelings. I want your assistance. I wish to employ you——"

"Stop a moment," said Nick. "What's the trouble?"

"I have been robbed—robbed of something for which I would not take a mint of money," Canfield forcibly explained. "Money is no object, Mr. Carter, in order to recover it. I will pay you any sum you ask, any price you set upon your services, if you——"

"Wait," Nick again interrupted. "I never fix an advance price for my services. I never know what may be required of me. Come to the point. State the circumstances, Mr. Canfield. Of what have you been robbed?"

"I can only state that it is a package of letters, a small package wrapped in oiled silk, bound in each direction with red tape and securely sealed," Canfield hurriedly explained. "I cannot tell you of what the letters consist, only that they are communications of vast importance, the publication of which must be prevented at any cost. It would spell ruin—ruin—*ruin!*"

"*Your* ruin?" questioned Nick, sharply eying the man.

"Oh, no, not mine, not mine," Canfield quickly protested. "But I had charge of the package. I am responsible for its safe-keeping. I must recover it, Carter, if I spend every dollar of my fortune. I should as soon die as——"

"Dead men accomplish nothing," Nick interrupted. "State the circumstances. When and by whom were you robbed?"

"By one of my servants, a girl named Maggie Doane. I reside in Gramercy Park, in the old homestead of our family, of which I am the last. I employ only a housekeeper, an elderly woman, who has served my family for a generation, and the girl mentioned. The package of letters was locked in my library desk, and the key of it I carry on a ring in my pocket. I——"

"Who, except you, knew that the letters were there?"

"I supposed that no one knew about them."

"How long have they been there?"

"About ten days."

"Do you know how Maggie Doane discovered them, or learned of their nature and the value you set upon them?" Nick asked.

"I have not the slightest idea," Canfield hurriedly answered. "The girl has been in my employ for nearly a year, and I supposed her perfectly honest. She——"

"When did you discover the theft?" Nick again interrupted.

"Less than an hour ago—it was all by chance," Canfield explained. "While on my way home to dinner, a time when both of my servants should have been in the house, I saw Maggie Doane crossing Park Avenue, at Twenty-third Street. I was surprised. I knew that the girl could have no legitimate errand at that time. Her looks and movements aroused my suspicion, moreover, for she was quite pale, and appeared to be in great haste, and very nervous. She did not see me, and I followed her. I did not suppose she had stolen anything, but I was determined to find out where she was going. I followed her to the Garden Theater, where she joined a man who evidently had been waiting for her."

"Did you know him?"

"No. He was a stranger to me. I saw him quite distinctly in the brightly lighted entrance, however, and I saw Maggie Doane take my package of letters from under her shawl and hand it to him."

"You were sure of that?"

"Absolutely sure," Canfield forcibly asserted. "You can imagine my dismay, my anger when I realized her treachery. I ran across the street, intending to have both of them arrested. They saw me coming.

"The girl said something to the man, informing him who I was, I think, for he at once fled at top speed through Twenty-seventh Street. I pursued him, but could not overtake him. I followed him up Park Avenue and through Thirty-fourth Street to Madison Avenue. He was met on the corner by another man, also a stranger to me, to whom I plainly saw him hand the package of letters."

"This smacks of a conspiracy," Nick remarked. "You followed the man who received the package, I take it?"

"Yes. I overtook him, after pursuing him about a block. I seized him by the collar and demanded my letters. He denied that he had them. He protested that he knew nothing about them. I was very angry, and undertook to search him. A crowd collected. He appealed for help, and I was seized by several men. The rascal escaped and fled down the avenue, but as soon as I could free myself I resumed my pursuit. I caught sight of him again at the corner above here. I thought I surely had him again, but he gave me the slip. I think he must have entered some house in this block, but I tried in vain to trace him. I then determined to call on you, to employ you to recover the stolen package. I will pay——"

"Stop a moment," said Nick. "You did not see him enter any house?"

"No. But he disappeared so quickly that I suspected it."

"And you are absolutely sure that he had the package of letters?"

"Yes, absolutely sure. I saw him distinctly when he received them. I know——"

"One moment," Nick again interrupted, rising. "I will presently see what I can do for you. Remain here until I return."

Nick did not wait for an answer. He had decided to bring his two visitors face to face, that he might judge from personal observation which was telling the truth. He crossed the hall and opened the reception-room door. The room was deserted. Mr. Gustave Rogler had vanished.

CHAPTER III.

NICK'S THIRD VISITOR.

Though somewhat surprised, Nick Carter at once came to the most natural conclusion in explanation of Rogler's sudden disappearance. He decided that, nervous and alarmed, yet seeing the coast clear, he had seized the opportunity to slip out of the house and head for home, rather than risk another encounter with Canfield.

Despite the latter's assertion, moreover, it did not seem reasonable to believe that Rogler had received the stolen letters. It seemed much more probable that Canfield had made a mistake in the uncertain light of the evening, and because of his own haste and excitement. Who would suppose, indeed, that a thief would flee to Nick Carter for protection? Who on earth would suspect him of hiding his plunder in Nick Carter's business office?

Either suspicion would at first sight appear literally absurd. It would seem like the act of a madman, or an imbecile. Upon second thought, however, the very audacity of such a move would be its strongest safeguard.

It very soon appeared, in fact, that Mr. Gustave Rogler knew precisely what he was doing, that there was a method in his madness, and that his entire conduct had been most foxy and sagacious, even worthy of as crafty and accomplished a knave as the one described by Judge Amos Langley.

Nick returned to his business office, where Patsy and Canfield were waiting. He had decided to drop the matter. It did not appeal to him. He announced the fact by saying a bit sharply:

"There's nothing I can do for you, Mr. Canfield."

"Nothing! But you said——"

"What I said now cuts no ice," Nick interrupted. "I don't wish to take such a case. As a matter of fact, Canfield, the man you were pursuing came in here for protection. He protested——"

"Came in here!" Canfield bounded out of his chair. "Where is he? Where——"

"Gone," Nick again cut in. "He left while you were talking. He protested his innocence, and offered to let me search him. I'm inclined to think, Canfield, that you made a mistake, and——"

"A mistake be hanged!" Canfield cried, white with anger. "Why didn't you tell me he was here? Why did you deceive me, double cross me by saying——"

"Stop right there," Nick commanded. "I never double cross any man. I supposed he still was here, and that I could settle the matter for you. As it stands, Mr. Canfield, you may settle it yourself. Here's the card he gave me, to which you are welcome. If you call on him in a pacific frame of mind, he may meet you halfway, and convince you of your error. That's all I shall do or say about it."

"Very well," snapped Canfield, snatching the card Nick tossed on the table. "I'll call on him—Gustave Rogler, eh? I'll call on him—and get what belongs to me, too, you can bet on that!"

He was out of the office and stamping through the hall before the last was said, and the bang of the front door announced his departure from the house.

"Gee! he's hot stuff, all right, when he cuts loose," commented Patsy, with a grin. "I reckon there would be nothing for us in that case, chief."

"It's not the kind of a case I choose to accept," Nick re-

plied. "Nor is he the type of man I like to serve. I've known him several years by sight and reputation. He's a stock gambler, a man who inherited a considerable fortune, but who never did a stroke of work, nor earned an honest dollar. I don't fancy such a fellow. Furthermore," Nick added, "I want my clients to confide in me without reservations. If Canfield had a package of letters that spells ruin for anybody, if published, how came he by them? What's the nature of them? Why didn't he inform me?"

"Gee! that's right, too," nodded Patsy, quick to see the point.

"Was he holding them as a menace over some one? I think he is quite capable of it, Patsy, and I would not bank very heavily on his manhood. Let him find his ruinous letters, if he can. I'm blessed if I shall undertake to do so."

As early as eight o'clock the following morning, while Nick sat discussing with Patsy Garvan and Chick Carter, his chief assistant, the disclosures made by Judge Langley, still another visitor appeared in his business office—a man whose mission further evinced the remarkable cunning and ultimate design of Mr. Gustave Rogler.

"Frederick Fiske, attorney," read Nick, when his servant brought in the visitor's card. "Attorney be hanged! He's a shyster lawyer of the first water. What can he want of me? Admit him, Joseph, and I'll soon find out."

Nick's visitor was not a prepossessing man. He was about forty years old. He was tall, brawny, and broad shouldered, slightly bowed, obviously a man of prodigious physical strength. His head was large, his face smoothly shaved. It was a hard, sinister face, with a broad mouth and square jaw. His gray eyes were narrow and deep set. They looked too small for so large a face. They gave it a peculiarly crafty expression, which in no degree was a libel on the man himself.

"Good morning, Mr. Carter," he said politely, yet with a disagreeable, rasping voice. "I hope you can give me a few moments."

"Otherwise, Mr. Fiske, I should not have received you," Nick replied, intently regarding the man. "What can I do for you? What's your business?"

"It relates to what occurred here last evening."

"Occurred here?"

"You had two visitors, I am told, one of whom was assaulted by the other before they arrived here," Fiske explained, with some approach to suavity. "One of them, the one who suffered the outrageous assault, was Mr. Gustave Rogler, a chemist and scientist, who lives in Lexington Avenue."

"That is correct, I believe, but what about it?" questioned Nick, not half liking the shifty light in the lawyer's narrow eyes.

"Merely this," said Fiske, "Mr. Rogler has placed the matter in my hands. He suffered great humiliation and a severe nervous shock. He wants redress. He wants his assailant arrested and——"

"Does he want me to arrest him?" Nick interrupted. "Is that why you have called?"

"Oh, no, indeed!" Fiske exclaimed, with a laugh that sounded somewhat forced. "Don't imagine that I would ask you to do the work of an ordinary policeman. But you can, I think, give me the information I require."

"Regarding what?"

"The identity of Rogler's assailant. Do you know him?"

"Yes."

"Ah, very good! What is his name?" Fiske demanded.

Nick did not immediately inform him. Instead, he surveyed the lawyer more sharply, and asked:

"When did Rogler retain you in this matter?"

"Early this morning," said Fiske. "He talked with me by telephone."

"Didn't his assailant call on him last evening after both had left here?"

"Yes, indeed! That is to say, he attempted to do so."

"Attempted to do so? What do you mean?"

"Why, he went to Rogler's house and tried to obtain admission, uttering threats of extreme violence, and breaking the doorbell in his efforts to arouse some one. Rogler finally talked with him from a second-story window, but refused to admit him. He told him he would call the police unless he departed. The man finally went away, and Rogler passed a sleepless night. He is of nervous temperament, and was very much upset. He now is resolved that the fellow shall be arrested and punished."

"Did he say why he left here so unceremoniously?" Nick inquired.

"He did, yes. He thought there was nothing to be gained by remaining," Fiske glibly explained. "He dreaded another meeting with the ruffian. He thought he could slip out and go home, and that his identity would not be known. In his nervousness and excitement, he forgot that he had given you his card."

"H'm, I see," Nick remarked. "That is about what I thought."

"That is the case, Mr. Carter, in a nutshell," Fiske added, tapping the crown of his hat, then lying on his knees. "That is my only business with you. I want you to tell me the name of Rogler's assailant. I shall get a warrant for his arrest, and—— Good God! What's that?"

The lawyer was interrupted by a terrific explosion, evidently nearly in front of the detective's residence. It was like the report of a ten-inch gun, or a blast in a stone quarry. It shook the buildings and rattled the windows of Nick's office.

"Great Scott!" Chick shouted. "That sounded like an infernal machine."

Both Patsy and Chick sprang up and rushed through the hall to the front door. Fiske dropped his hat in the excitement and it rolled under the office table. Nick arose and hastened to look from the window.

Mr. Frederick Fiske then made the move for which he really had come there so early that morning. He stooped, ostensibly to get his hat, and his long arm and gaunt hand glided like a flash into the detective's wastebasket. When he withdrew it, his hand held the stolen package of letters dropped into the basket by Rogler the night before.

With a look of sinister cunning in his narrow eyes, Fiske slipped the fateful package into his pocket and then joined Nick at the window.

A crowd had collected in the street. The smoke caused by the explosion still hung in a gray cloud between the buildings. There appeared, however, to have been no harm done.

Chick Carter was questioning a well-dressed man on the curbing, who evidently was explaining to the best of his ability what had occurred.

It appeared, or so Chick said when he returned to the

office, that the man had seen, while approaching Nick's residence, what he supposed was a round stone lying on the sidewalk. Apprehending that some one might step on it and meet with an accident, he had picked it up and tossed it into the street.

The explosion had immediately followed.

"It was part of a stick of dynamite, perhaps, dropped by a careless workman employed in constructing the new subway," Chick added. "One of the laborers was seen going down the avenue with some packages only a few moments before the explosion occurred. There seems to be no other reasonable explanation."

"I'll wager that is the correct one," Fiske readily agreed. "It's very lucky that no one was injured. Now, Mr. Carter, if you will give me the information I require, I will take no more of your valuable time."

"The man's name is Joseph Canfield."

"Thank you, Mr. Carter." Fiske bowed, smirked, and rubbed his oily hands. "Really, sir, I am indebted to you, deeply indebted. I thank you again. Your kindness——"

"Good morning!" Nick put in bluntly.

"Good morning, Mr. Carter! Good morning!"

CHAPTER IV.

A LINK IN THE CHAIN.

At eight o'clock in the evening, three days following the episodes described, a venerable-looking man walking with a cane approached one of the most magnificent residences overlooking Riverside Drive and rang the bell. He evidently was expected. For a butler promptly admitted him, conducting him to a superbly furnished library, from which he then withdrew and closed the door. A young lady arose to meet the visitor. She was a type one would have expected to find in such an abode of wealth and culture. She was in the twenties, a graceful, dark-eyed girl, of exceeding beauty, yet whose refined face wore a look of deep-seated sadness and anxiety. She was in sober evening dress, though the shapely white hand she extended in greeting her visitor was adorned with very costly rings.

"Miss Julia Delmore, I believe," said the aged man, as he bowed, smiling gravely.

"Yes," she replied. "You are Mr. Carter, of course, though I really was expecting to see a much younger man."

"No doubt," returned Nick, for the visitor was none other than the celebrated detective. "As a matter of fact, however, I am not as venerable as I look."

"No?"

"The letter I received from you to-day, while it stated nothing definite, led me to infer that you require my services. Secrecy sometimes being of advantage in my business, Miss Delmore, I decided to call on you in disguise. I will remove it while talking with you."

Julia Delmore smiled when he did so, remarking, with a look of wonderment:

"Dear me, what a startling change! You detectives are as mystifying as magicians."

"Like is best met with like," Nick replied. "We are delvers in mysteries, you know. This was merely a precaution, however, which events may show to have been entirely needless."

"I am inclined to think the contrary," she rejoined. "Take this chair, Mr. Carter, and I will tell you why I have sent for you. I feel very grateful to you for coming."

"Don't speak of it, Miss Delmore," said Nick, while she took a chair near him. "Though I never have had the pleasure of meeting you, I long have known your father. I hope he is in a fair way to recovery."

The expression of sadness quickly returned to the girl's face.

"I hope for the best," she replied. "He has improved slightly since his removal to the sanitarium, but still is utterly unable to discuss his business affairs intelligibly. The failure of the Publican Bank, at a time when he was on the verge of physical and nervous collapse, seemed to crush him mentally. You know all about it, I suppose?"

"I am only indefinitely informed," said Nick. "I was in England when it occurred."

"I will inform you, then. I have sent for you in order to do so. I am in great trouble—two kinds of trouble."

"I would be very glad to help you out of both," Nick said earnestly. "I know your father well. He is a fine man."

"You are very kind to say that, Mr. Carter, when he is under such a cloud of suspicion," Miss Delmore gratefully answered. "I will state the circumstances as briefly as possible. I then want your advice and assistance."

"You shall have both," Nick warmly assured her.

"My father was, as you probably know, the head of the Publican Bank, the failure of which was such a surprise to the business community."

"Your father was ill at the time, I believe."

"Yes. For two months before the collapse he had been suffering from overwork and was on the verge of nervous prostration. He was confined at home at intervals during several months, yet he continued to direct the affairs of the bank through messengers and daily visits by the treasurer. That he was of unsound mind at the time, and not morally responsible for his acts, no one suspected. Very few now believe it, in fact, but attribute his present mental condition to the bank failure and his misapplication of the bank funds."

"Knowing your father very well, Miss Delmore, I view the circumstances much more charitably."

"That is very kind," she replied. "I wish to confide certain facts to you which are not generally known, and which may fully convince you, at least, that my father was not morally responsible. Without tangible evidence in support of that assertion, however, neither the public nor the receiver now in charge of the bank would believe me."

"Tell me the facts, Miss Delmore," said Nick. "I will judge for myself."

The girl drew forward in her chair, more grave and earnest. One looking at her pale face and sadly expressive eyes could not have doubted her honesty, nor that she was burdened with a terrible grief. She gazed steadily at Nick, as if fain to read his thoughts, and replied:

"The failure of the Publican Bank was entirely due, Mr. Carter, to a loan of nearly half a million dollars to the Empton Trust Company, which, though the fact was not then suspected, was utterly insolvent. That loan was made by my father—but it was made under criminal and most outrageous coercion."

"Are you sure of that?"

"Absolutely sure."

"But cannot prove it?"

"I have been robbed of the only evidence necessary to prove it."

"Robbed by whom?"

"By a treacherous scoundrel whom I long had regarded as a friend."

"Tell me all of the facts. By whom was your father coerced into making so large a loan?"

"By the city chamberlain, the late Gideon Canfield."

"H'm, is that so?" Nick drew up, with brows knitting slightly. "You interest me, Miss Delmore. When did Gideon Canfield do this?"

"Nearly four months ago, when my father was confined at home with his first attack of nervous prostration. He did not go to the bank for several weeks, and Gideon Canfield called here twice to see him, and wrote him several letters relating to their business. Those letters, Mr. Carter, prove conclusively that Canfield used the power and pressure of his official position unlawfully, to force my father to loan the funds of the Publican Bank to the Empton Trust Company, in which Canfield was secretly interested—a fact not suspected until after his sudden death, which was followed two weeks later by the failure of the bank and the collapse of the trust company."

Nick's face did not reflect his thoughts. He knew the letters mentioned must be those stolen from Joseph Canfield, the only son of the recently deceased city official.

Recalling all of the circumstances, the disclosures made by Judge Langley, the visit of Gustave Rogler, his strange story and stealthy departure after the entrance of Canfield, the visit of Fiske the following morning, a lawyer whose reputation was far from the best—these circumstances, in view of what Julia Delmore was stating, convinced Nick that a conspiracy of no mean proportions existed, which he should thwart not only for her sake, but also in the interest of justice.

"You speak, Miss Delmore," said he, quick to detect the girl's insinuation, "as if there was some connection between Gideon Canfield's sudden death and the financial disasters that followed."

"I have no doubt of it," replied Julia. "I think Gideon Canfield committed suicide."

"For what reason?"

"Because, Mr. Carter, I know he was directly responsible for the wrecking of both banks, and he knew that a speedy exposure was inevitable. He was found dead in his library. He is said to have died of apoplexy. But he left instructions, evidently written when his will was made, though not incorporated in it, that his remains should be cremated."

"That was done?"

"Yes. It prevented an autopsy, of course, after the trust company collapsed. I believe he foresaw the suspicions that would follow, and that he took poison and left those instructions only to prevent an exposure of his felonies and the true cause of his death."

"Did his letters contain any evidence of it?"

"They were sufficient to prove his felonies and his outrageous coercion of my father, who was in no mental condition to oppose him."

"Were they addressed to your father?"

"Yes. They were written with a pen and bore Gideon Canfield's signature."

"When did you discover them?"

"Two weeks ago," said Julia. "I have been much depressed by all that has occurred, and was not inclined to look into my father's private affairs. I was advised to do so two weeks ago, however, by a man whom I long have regarded as a friend. I refer to Gideon Canfield's only son, Joseph Canfield."

"How long have you known him?"

"For several years. He has been attentive to me, and I confess that I found him agreeable. He wanted me to marry him, but I declined his offer, and the fact that he accepted my refusal without displaying any resentment convinced me that he was, indeed, a devoted and loyal friend. All that now is changed. I know him to be a scoundrel, and my worst foe. He wore the mask only to accomplish his evil designs and get me in his power."

"In his power?"

"Yes. Let me explain."

"Do so."

"He called here frequently after my father's removal to a sanitarium, ostensibly to express his sympathy and give me his advice. I had faith in him. I still thought him a devoted friend. One day he advised me to examine my father's correspondence, which was here in the library desk. He said it might shed some favorable light on the bank's affairs. Even when he offered to assist me, explaining that his knowledge of banking might aid me, I did not suspect him of any duplicity."

"He evidently suspected that his father had written the letters, Miss Delmore, and took that course to get possession of them," Nick remarked.

"I now know that to have been his motive."

"Continue," said Nick.

"I found eight letters, and some memoranda relative to them which my father had written. They were secured with a rubber band and were in a pigeonhole in his desk."

"Canfield remained, of course, while you read them."

"Yes. I requested him to read them, also. He admitted the significance of each letter. He pretended to be amazed, horrified to learn of what his father had been guilty. He agreed with me that they exonerated my father, and begged me not to make an immediate disclosure, but to give him time for consideration. We discussed the matter calmly, and I consented to place the letters in the desk until the following day, when we were to confer again. He left here about five o'clock. An hour later, Mr. Carter, I opened the desk to refer to the letters again. They were gone."

"Stolen by Canfield, of course."

"Yes—while I was called from the room for a moment."

"I should have expected it," said Nick. "They evidently shift the criminal responsibility from your father to his."

"That is precisely what they do."

"Naturally, then, being a chip of the old block, he would steal them," Nick added. "What did you do about it?"

"I was filled with dismay when I realized his treachery," said Julia, with a bitter ring stealing into her voice. "I went at once to his home, in Gramercy Park. I found him there, and saw him under true colors. He admitted the theft, that he had the letters, that he knew all about them when he called, and that he intended to use them for his own ends."

"Namely?"

"He said that I should marry him, that he held my father's honor in his hand, that mine in marriage was the only price he would accept for a publication of the truth. Base to the core, he agreed to reveal all, expose the knavery and crimes of his own father, in order to exonerate mine—providing I first would marry him."

"He evidently is a much worse egg than I have supposed," said Nick. "I'm inclined to think he knows much

more about his father's crimes than has appeared on the surface. Proceed, however, and tell me what followed."

"There is little more to tell, Mr. Carter," she sadly answered. "I realized the situation. The letters were the only evidence of the truth. Without them any assertions I might make would be futile. I argued with him. I implored him to return them. I offered him any sum of money he might demand. I am worth nearly a million in my own name. I offered fifty, then a hundred thousand dollars, but he laughed at me, and declared that my hand was more to him than my fortune. I returned home disheartened, averse to appealing to the police, and I since have been trying to determine what I should do. It occurred to me to-day that my father has frequently spoken of you as a friend, and I——"

"You decided to appeal to me, Miss Delmore," put in Nick, smiling. "You could not have done better."

"You will aid me?" she eagerly asked, with countenance lighting.

"I certainly will, Miss Delmore, and will lose no time in doing so," Nick assured her.

"I am more than glad to hear you say so, Mr. Carter. It relieves me greatly. Can you give me any hope that you will recover the letters?"

"I will do all that can be done to find them, and to place the guilt where it belongs. In the meantime, you must follow my instructions. You must take no further steps in the matter, nor reveal to any one that I have an interest in it. I do not want it suspected, even, that I am at work on the case."

"I will say absolutely nothing about it," said Julia earnestly. "I leave it entirely to you."

"I do not think you will regret doing so," replied Nick, rising to go. "I will replace my disguise before leaving. I may have other instructions for you later, in which case I will phone you, or send one of my assistants."

CHAPTER V.

THE MARKED DOOR.

Eight o'clock next morning found Nick Carter, Chick, and Patsy Garvan in earnest discussion of the case, the mystery as to the whereabouts of the stolen letters, and the ways and means by which they might be traced and recovered.

"The superficial features may be sized up in a nutshell," Nick was saying, from the swivel chair near his desk. "Joe Canfield is a double-dealing dog of the worst kind, but he has been bitten by teeth as sharp as his own. He has been robbed of the lever with which he designed to wrong Julia Delmore and shift to her father's shoulders the crimes committed by his. It is a safe assumption that Gideon Canfield thought the incriminating letters had been destroyed, but his recreant son evidently knew better. How much more he knew, and in how far he personally figured in the crimes is an open question."

"The main question is, Nick, who now has the letters?" said Chick. "We know that Maggie Doane stole them, but how did she learn anything about them?"

"That question is easily answered," Nick replied. "She must have overheard Julia Delmore's interview with him, heard her offer him even a hundred thousand dollars for the letters, and that put her wise to their value."

"By Jove, that does explain it. But why did she turn them over to another? Canfield saw her hand them to a man in the Garden Theater entrance."

"That brings up what Judge Langley stated earlier that evening about some unknown crook who, with the help of numerous servants lured into league with him, is operating extensively in this city."

"He may have been the very man, then, who received the letters."

"That appears probable, though the recipient may have been another of his confederates," Nick pointed out. "Canfield pursued him and thought he gave the package of letters to Gustave Rogler. The fact that Rogler rushed in here for protection, however, and offered to let me search him, seems to negative that assertion."

"I admit that, Nick. Nevertheless, Canfield must have felt very sure of it, or he would not have dropped the other man and followed Rogler."

"That's very true, Chick, and it may be that Rogler played a more crafty game than I suspected at the time."

"For what reason?"

"Because Rogler sent that shyster lawyer here the following morning," Nick explained. "Fiske said he had been retained by Rogler to prosecute his assailant, whose identity I disclosed. Strange to say, however, nothing has been done about it. In fact, there have been no further developments in any quarter. What's the reason for that?"

"By Jove, that's quite a pertinent question!"

"Fiske declared that he should obtain a warrant and have Canfield arrested, but he has done nothing of the kind."

"True."

"He stated that Canfield went to Rogler's house that evening, where he was refused admission, and made serious threats against him. Why has he not made good? Why has he not executed any of his threats? There must be some reason for it."

"Rogler may have convinced him that he did not have the letters," Chick suggested.

"I don't think so," Nick quickly reasoned. "If convinced of that, Canfield would have apologized, and squared himself. Rogler, if his fears and nervousness when here were genuine, would have been glad enough to have dropped the matter."

"Sure thing, chief," Patsy put in, with a nod.

"On the contrary, however, Rogler started Fiske after him the next morning," Nick forcibly argued. "That shows that their differences had not been adjusted. But Fiske, though hotheaded enough when here, has taken no action against Canfield. There must be some reason why all hands so suddenly ceased hostilities."

"They may have found the letters and come to some agreement in regard to them."

"That's the very point, Chick."

"To which you were coming?"

"Yes. Unless the package of letters was found, or its whereabouts definitely known, matters could not have been patched up so quickly. That's why I now suspect that Rogler may, after all, have had the letters on his person when he rushed in here that evening. His offer to let me search him may have been only a move to head off my doing so."

"He's a very sly rat, Nick, in that case," asserted Chick thoughtfully. "We must assume, then, that he turned the whole trick only because he feared Canfield would overtake him, and that the letters would be found on his person."

"Exactly."

"And that he bolted for the same reason, when he saw the coast was clear."

"Certainly."

"But why, in that case, did he reveal his identity? He must have known that Canfield, if he came in here, would learn who he was."

"He gave me his card when he first came in, bear in mind, not knowing positively whether Canfield had seen him. He may have done so only to impress me favorably and to pave the way for getting safely out with the letters."

"Do you really believe that?" Chick inquired.

"Well, not exactly believe it," Nick replied. "I merely say it may have been the case. As a matter of fact, however, there is nothing for us in mere speculation. Somebody has the letters, and we must find out who that somebody is, and relieve him of them. I have promised Julia Delmore that I will save her from Canfield, and set her father right—and I'm going to do it. I have several schemes. There was only one probable motive in stealing the package of letters from Canfield, that of selling them to Julia Delmore. If she was willing to pay Canfield a hundred thousand dollars for them, the thief may reason that she can be forced into paying twice that sum."

"You don't mean Maggie Doane?"

"No. I mean the crook, or the gang for whom Maggie Doane was at work. I am convinced that she was only a tool, the cat's-paw of others."

"No doubt."

"Whoever has the letters, then, will attempt, sooner or later, to sell them to Julia Delmore and blackmail her into paying an outrageous price," Nick continued. "I have directed her to say nothing about my being in her employ. The crook, being ignorant of that, will suppose he takes no great chances in approaching the girl, or in having a confederate do so. By taking advantage of that, we may get on the track of the big finger in this game, and quite possibly the very man whom Langley told me about."

"Gee! I hope so, chief, for fair," exclaimed Patsy. "We'll give him a run for the money, all right."

"That scheme will not be attempted immediately, however, but we will plan for it a little later," Nick added. "There's nothing in hitching a string to a bow till ready to use it."

"That's right, too."

"First, I wish to learn what these several parties are doing, and why none of them has made good."

"Hadn't we better tackle them separately, chief?" asked Patsy.

"I had that in view," Nick nodded. "I want you, Patsy, to get after Canfield, and more particularly that girl who stole the letters. Find out what Canfield has been doing since the theft. That done, get after Maggie Doane and learn who she is and where she came from, what her habits have been, and with whom she associates. Trace her, if possible, for she probably did not return to Canfield's house."

"She may have joined the gang, chief, and be lying low with them."

"In that case, you will not easily find her."

"I'll give it a try, at all events."

"Set about it, then, and inform me of any important discoveries."

"Trust me for that," said Patsy. "I'll wager I get next to something worth knowing."

He did not delay his departure. He had been making ready while receiving Nick's instructions, and half a minute later he was on his way to Canfield's house in Gramercy Park.

"In the meantime, Chick," Nick proceeded, "you run up to Rogler's house, in Lexington Avenue. Find out what kind of a crib he occupies, and see what you can learn about him. He claimed, you remember, to be a scientist and chemist, and that he has an extensive laboratory in his house. If you can invent some occasion for calling on him, and succeed in getting an interview with him, you can get wise to something."

"Quite likely," Chick agreed. "I'll undertake it this morning."

"Go in disguise, however, and say nothing that might arouse suspicion. Our work must be done on the quiet until we get a definite line on our quarry."

"What are your own plans?"

"I'm going after that lawyer, Fiske," Nick said, rising and taking his hat. "I telephoned to his office twice yesterday, but could not raise him."

It was nine o'clock when the two detectives left Nick's residence. They parted on the first corner, Chick heading at once for Rogler's quarters, in Lexington Avenue, while Nick took a taxicab to the office of the lawyer. It was on the third floor in a building in Broadway. The only occupant of Fiske's office was the lawyer's office boy, who told Nick that Fiske had not been at his office for two days, and that he had had no word from him. The boy told Nick that Fiske was living at his brother's flat, the brother having gone to South America in pursuit of his hobby, the collection of curios.

Getting the address of the flat Nick started uptown. Half an hour later, arriving at a rather inferior West Side apartment house, Nick found that the lawyer's brother, whom he afterward learned was an eccentric man of moderate means, rented a flat on the second floor.

The lower hall and the bare stairways leading to the floors above were deserted. They were dusty and ill kept, and he rightly inferred that there was no janitor service, and that the tenants of each flat were required to care for their part of the house. This was confirmed by the presence of a corpulent Irish woman, with a shawl held around her, whom Nick found gazing doubtfully at the closed door of Fiske's apartments.

"What's the trouble, madam?" he inquired. "Can't you get in?"

"Faith, sir, I can't," said the woman. "Nor could I yisterday whin I came here. I had to go away, sir, without cleaning up."

"Are you employed by Mr. Fiske?"

"I am, sir. I'm paid to come wance a week and swape and dust his rooms. Sure, sir, it's worth all I get, for they're filled with a divil's own lot of rubbish. Yisterday was me day, sir, but——"

"You have no key, I take it?" Nick put in.

"I have not. I'm supposed to come before Mr. Fiske is after l'aving in the morning. I couldn't wake him yisterday, so thought he must be away. I'm late to-day, sir, having another place to look after. I thought he might be here, but the door——"

"Stop a moment," Nick interrupted.

Turning while the woman was speaking, he had discov-

ered a strange figure marked on the door. It was about two inches long and was just above the knob—two straight lines evidently drawn with a red crayon pencil.

The figure formed was an inverted cross.

It also resembled—a dagger, with the blade pointing upward.

CHAPTER VI.

FOUND DEAD.

Nick Carter gazed briefly at the ominous figure on the door. At once recalling what Judge Langley had said about the secret passwords, signs, and symbols employed by the unknown knave he had mentioned, Nick suspected that the figure might have some sanguinary significance. He turned to the woman and asked:

"Have you noticed this red cross on the door?"

"Faith, I have!" she replied, nodding quickly.

"Did you see it when here yesterday?"

"I did, sir, but I couldn't get in for the rags to wash it off."

"Fiske evidently is out of town," said Nick, deciding to get rid of the woman before entering the flat. "You need not remain. I'm going to write a short letter for him and slip it under the door. He'll find it when he returns."

The mere suggestion was enough. The woman muttered that her time was worth something, then turned away and waddled down the stairs.

Nick waited until he heard her in the lower hall, then he drew a ring of keys from his pocket, selected one, and inserted it in the lock, the bolt of which he soon succeeded in throwing.

At first, however, he could not open the door. It yielded a little under pressure, showing that it was not bolted within, and it then came against some heavy obstruction.

Pressing his shoulder to the door, Nick gradually forced it open.

The obstruction proved to be a heavy trunk. Two chairs on top of it fell noisily to the floor of the narrow entry leading into the flat. That obviously was the design with which they had been placed there.

The entry led into a square room, the curtains of which were closely drawn. It was filled with a nondescript collection of curiosities from all parts of the world.

A heavy portière hung across the door of an adjoining room. Nick swept it aside, and entered—only to recoil involuntarily from the scene that met his gaze.

It was an interior room. There were no ordinary windows. Through a broad skylight forming an upper part of one of the walls, however, came enough daylight to reveal the details of the startling picture.

The room, like the other, contained a part of Mr. Phineas Fiske's collection of curiosities. They were chiefly of an armorial character.

On the floor near a fireplace was an ancient iron chest. It might by its looks have been the treasure chest of a wealthy peer, or perhaps a Spanish buccaneer. The cover had been pried open with a warrior's pike, which still was lying near the empty chest.

Obviously there had been a robbery—and a murder. For in an armchair, a few feet from the fireplace, sat a dead man, the lawyer himself—Mr. Frederick Fiske.

He was fully dressed, though his feet were thrust into slippers and he wore a loose, plush smoking jacket. A brier pipe had dropped from his hand and was lying on the floor. Near it were the scattered tobacco and ashes which had fallen from it when it struck. An evening newspaper was lying beside his chair.

His head was resting against the upholstered back of the chair, as if he had dropped asleep while reading and smoking, and died without waking.

One glance at his upturned white face, however, told the detective a more terrible story.

"Good heavens!" he muttered, staggered for a moment. "Langley was right. Here 'tis again—the symbol of vengeance! The deadly purple spot!"

Fiske's brow bore, indeed, the mark of the avenger. Glaring in dark contrast with the surrounding hueless skin, as if the tip of a finger wet with a purple fluid had touched it, was the fatal mark described by Judge Langley. The sign of the master crook he had mentioned, the token that treachery had been punished with death.

Nick Carter, though startled by the discovery, lost no time in beginning an investigation. At the very outset, however, he found himself confronted with a baffling mystery. First, as to the cause of Fiske's death. There were no wounds, no signs of violence, no evidence that poison had been taken with suicidal intent, or covertly administered. At first sight, one would have said that the man had suddenly died of heart disease, while he sat smoking and reading his evening paper.

Suicide, however, was out of the question. The body was marked with the purple spot. What suicide would have so disfigured himself before committing the dreadful deed? Why have barricaded the door, moreover, when the lock was sufficient to keep out intruders? There had, too, been a robbery—additional evidence of the more heinous crime.

Nick examined the open newspaper on the floor. It was an evening edition of two days before, or the previous Tuesday. Obviously, as the condition of the body also indicated, Fiske had been killed during the early hours of Tuesday night.

But how had he been killed? What means had been employed? Who was the murderer, and how had he entered and departed? He could not have left through the door of the flat, for that must have been barricaded after the door was finally closed. Obviously, Fiske could not have placed the obstruction there after the crime was committed.

"By Jove, he may have done it before the murder," thought Nick, after reasoning along the above lines. "In that case, he must have feared that his life was in danger. He must have placed the trunk with the two chairs on top of it to prevent the opening of the door without throwing them to the floor, causing enough noise to wake him after he went to bed.

"How the dickens, then, was he killed before going to bed?" Nick continued to question himself. "How was he caught napping before he retired? How did his assailant get in here unheard? He must have been an extraordinarily clever rascal. Yes, by Jove, I guess Langley was right! We have a crook in this city who certainly knows his business."

Nick glanced up at the skylight. It was made of small squares of thick, partly opaque glass, which admitted the light, but through which one could not see. The squares were set in an iron frame, like a latticed window, but it could not be opened.

"The rascal could not have entered that way," thought Nick. "I'll have a look in the other rooms."

The adjoining one was a small bedroom. The folding bed was closed and the room in decent order. It evidently had been intended for a dining room, for a small kitchen adjoined it. The windows in both rooms were closed and locked. There was no rear door to the flat, apparently no way of entering it.

"Clever work, indeed," thought Nick. "How did the scamp come and go? Has he left no trace behind him?"

Returning, Nick gazed again at the gruesome figure in the armchair.

"Dead since Tuesday night," he muttered. "He called on me Tuesday morning, after the visits of Canfield and Rogler on Monday evening. He had been employed by Rogler to have Canfield arrested. Was this murder the result? Did Canfield commit it? Or was Rogler playing some secret game from the outset? Is he a thousand times more crafty than appears on the surface, and in reality guilty of——".

Nick's train of thought ended abruptly, for he heard the slight scraping of a chair leg on a bare floor. He tiptoed to the door and peered into the adjoining room, the one he first had entered.

Another man was peering into it from the opposite entry, a man with knit brows, drawn lips, and eyes gleaming like those of a lynx. He was the very man of whom Nick Carter was thinking a moment before—Mr. Gustave Rogler.

The eyes of the two men met, and Nick, stepping into the room, at once said a bit sharply:

"Come in, instead of looking in, Mr. Rogler. Why are you waiting? What do you want here?"

"Well, to be perfectly frank, since you insist upon an answer—I am looking for Lawyer Fiske," Rogler said deliberately. "What's he doing? Why is the trunk in the entry? Is he moving out?"

"He has moved out—permanently," said Nick, with grim dryness.

"Moved out! Dear me, is it possible? He said nothing to me about it day before yesterday."

"Did you see him, then?"

"No, I talked with him by telephone."

"About what time?"

"Early. About half past seven."

"He was here at that hour, then?"

"Yes, of course, or I couldn't have got him. He——"

"Stop a moment," said Nick, interrupting. "There is no telephone here, Mr. Rogler. It was impossible for you to have talked with him."

The trap was quietly sprung, and Rogler was caught in it. As Nick afterward learned, however, the nerves of this man were under absolute control, and his presence of mind was superior to any threatening circumstances. Only for the hundredth part of a second were there any signs of perturbation—a slight waning of color, a quick twitch of his thin, red lips, and one lightningslike flash of his dilating eyes. Then he laughed a bit icily and said:

"No telephone here—well, I didn't dream of that! Nevertheless, Mr. Carter, I talked with him. He must have been in his law office."

"Half past seven is an early hour for a lawyer to be in his office."

"Whether early, Mr. Carter, or late—I talked with him by telephone," he said slowly, as if to give weight to his words.

Though now doubly suspicious of this man, Nick had an object in concealing his distrust, and a motive for the course he was shaping.

"No doubt you are right, Mr. Rogler, of course," he replied. "Your explanation is entirely satisfactory. You never have been here before, I take it?"

"No, never," said Rogler. "The place looks like a museum."

"It belongs to his brother, who is a collector of curiosities," said the detective. "What brought you here this morning?"

"I should think you might guess."

"Why so?"

"Didn't Fiske call on you Tuesday morning? He told me he would."

"Well, as a matter of fact, he did."

"He said he would obtain from you the name of the ruffian who assaulted me the previous evening," Rogler coolly proceeded. "He phoned me, later, that he had done so."

"That was correct," said Nick. "I told him the man's name."

"But he has done nothing about the matter," frowned Rogler, speaking with a resentful snarl. "No arrest has been made. I don't understand it. I do not like this delay. I am resolved that the insolent bully shall be punished. I came here this morning to find out why Fiske has not followed my instructions."

"At this hour?" queried Nick, a bit pointedly. "I should think you would have gone to his office."

Rogler was not to be caught again, much less cornered.

"I telephoned to his office," he readily answered. "I was told, evidently by a lad in his employ, that he had not been there for two days, and that I might find him here."

"Ah, I see," Nick nodded. "That explains it."

"Explains it?" echoed Rogler, with a sharper stare. "Was an explanation necessary, Mr. Carter? I suppose I have a perfect right to call here, have I not?"

"Yes, yes, to be sure," Nick admitted. "Don't misunderstand me. I did not mean to imply——"

"No apology is necessary," Rogler interrupted, with a covert sneer. "I might as reasonably ask, perhaps, why you are here. Such a display of curiosity, idle curiosity, Mr. Carter, would be discourteous. You evidently did not think of that. Can you tell me where Fiske has moved to?"

"No, not definitely," Nick said dryly. "Down, I think."

"Downtown?"

"Yes."

"There is nothing for me in remaining here, then," said Rogler, backing toward the door. "I shall seek him later in his office. I don't like his delay—I don't like it!"

"Why don't you employ a more reliable lawyer?" Nick inquired. "I happen to know that Fiske is not entirely trustworthy. He is capable of serving one of his clients, even, a treacherous trick. He may get the best of you in some way."

"You are mistaken—greatly mistaken. He cannot get the best of me," Rogler forcibly insisted, ejecting each word between his teeth with increasing vehemence. "The best of me, indeed! You don't know what you are saying. No man ever gets the best of me—no man! Even you, if you

were to try it, would find that out. No man gets the best of me! Good morning, Mr. Carter!"

With which parting shots, sent with unmistakable significance at the listening detective, Mr. Gustave Rogler drew his coat around him, then turned on his heel and departed.

Nick let him go, without replying.

CHAPTER VII.

NICK CARTER'S DEDUCTIONS.

Nick Carter had several reasons for not detaining Rogler, and for saying nothing to him about Fiske's mysterious death. He was not quite ready to show his hand, despite the fact that he now felt reasonably sure of his suspicions concerning the other.

Hardly a minute had passed after Rogler's departure, when Nick heard quick steps on the hall stairs, immediately followed by the entrance of Chick Carter.

"I thought he must have found you here," he said hurriedly. "Shall I continue to shadow him? He evidently is heading for home."

"No," replied Nick. "Let him go. I'll get after him later. You tracked him here from his house?"

"Yes. I saw him leaving just as I came in sight of his house. It's not far from here. We walked the distance in ten minutes. I've seen Patsy. He was coming here in search of you. Canfield hasn't been home, nor any word received from him, since Monday noon."

"H'm, is that so?"

"It was Monday evening, you know, that he saw Maggie Doane get away with the package of letters. He called on you later, and Fiske said that he afterward went to Rogler's house. He hasn't been seen since, so far as Patsy could learn, nor has Maggie Doane showed up at his residence."

"Where is Patsy now?"

"I sent him back to Canfield's house to watch for the girl."

"Very good," Nick said approvingly. "This sheds still more light on the case. Canfield may have been done up in order to keep him quiet. In that case, if the girl is in touch with the gang, she must know that Canfield's housekeeper has no grounds for seriously suspecting her. She may return sooner or later to get her belongings. She must have left all of her clothing there, not having supposed that Canfield would see her get away with the letters."

"That was my theory," Chick nodded. "That's why I sent Patsy back there. What about Fiske?"

"Murdered."

"The devil you say!"

"Oh, we are up against the real thing," Nick declared significantly. "Come and see for yourself."

"What did Rogler want?"

"Unless I'm much mistaken, he wanted to find out whether anything was doing here—and who was doing it," Nick pointedly replied, as he led the way into the adjoining room.

"You suspect him?"

"I do," and Nick lost no time in telling Chick all that had transpired, how he got into the flat, what he had done, and all that had passed between him and Rogler.

"Well, well, it does look bad, for fair," said Chick, after listening attentively. "The purple spot again—what do you make of it? You think Rogler knew about it?"

"More than that—I think he committed it."

"For what reason?"

"Because I have taken a tumble to what was done last Monday night," Nick said tritely. "I know now what I did not suspect at the time. We were finely buncoed, bamboozled, and made fools of. But I feel less chagrin than if I had not finally discovered it myself. There is some credit in that, and it was not a trick to have been easily suspected."

"I don't get you," said Chick, looking puzzled. "What trick? Bamboozled by whom?"

"By my three visitors on that evening and the following morning—Rogler, Canfield, and this poor devil."

"You think they were in league?"

"Not exactly," said Nick significantly. "Rogler came first; you know with what pretensions. I now am convinced, however, that he had the package of letters. He was so closely pursued by Canfield, that he feared he might be caught and the letters found on him. So he rushed into my library, where Patsy and I were seated, and while we looked from the window and door for his pursuer, the crafty rascal got rid of the letters by hiding them."

"Hiding them?"

"Possibly back of my desk, under the table, or in my wastebasket," Nick explained. "It matters little where, Chick, but that was what he did. What safer place could he have found than in my library?"

"By Jove! such a trick would not naturally be suspected," Chick agreed. "But why are you so sure of it?"

"You'll presently see," said Nick. "Canfield, close on Rogler's track, entered a little later. His statements of the circumstances were for the most part correct. You know how I turned him down and got rid of him. Rogler slipped out of the house in the meantime, leaving the letters where he had hid them."

"But wasn't that taking a long chance? We might have discovered them."

"Hardly the ghost of a chance," said Nick. "It was a hundred to one that we would not suspect such a trick. Nor were we likely to stumble upon the letters that evening."

"I admit that."

"Bear in mind, too, that Fiske showed up as early as eight o'clock the following morning. He pretended that he wanted to learn Canfield's identity, but that was not his mission."

"He was after the letters?"

"As sure as you're a foot high! That explosion in the street was a put-up job. It was pulled off only to divert our attention."

"By Jove, I guess you're right!" Chick exclaimed, now seeing the point.

"I know I'm right," Nick said confidently. "The explosion took you and Patsy to the street and me to the front window. Fiske, however, did not leave his chair. That is to say, not until he had seized the opportunity to nail the letters and slip them into his pocket. He then joined me at the window, but he left almost immediately afterward."

"Yes, yes, it's a cinch!" said Chick, quick to appreciate the convincing circumstances. "It was, indeed, a crafty trick. No wonder we did not suspect it. Fiske was in

league with Rogler, all right, but what's the meaning of this? Why should Rogler have killed him?"

"That is equally plain," Nick replied. "I have always known that Fiske was capable of any double-dealing treachery. Having got the letters and knowing their value, he determined to go the whole hog, and keep all he could get from Julia Delmore for them, instead of turning them over to Rogler."

"Ah, I see!"

"That treachery has cost him his life," Nick continued. "I suspected all this the moment I saw the purple spot on his forehead. It is the symbol of vengeance, as Langley stated. It shows that treachery to the gang of which Rogler undoubtedly is the chief, the master crook Langley mentioned, will invariably be punished with death."

"It certainly has been in this case, Nick, assuming that you are right."

"It's as plain as twice two," Nick insisted. "Fiske knew how desperate a game he was playing, and he knew that Rogler, or some of his gang, would get after him. He evidently came here Tuesday evening, still having the letters, and locked them in this iron chest and hid the key."

"That's why it was broken open."

"Exactly. The crooks who did this job evidently could not find the key."

"I see."

"To prevent being surprised by them, or killed after going to bed, Fiske barricaded the door and placed two chairs so that it could not be opened without awaking him. They fell to the floor when I forced the door open. His precautions proved futile, however, showing that he was up against a much more crafty and capable scoundrel than he realized. He was caught, killed, and robbed of his own plunder, in spite of his fears and precautions."

Chick Carter gazed in silence for a moment around the strangely furnished room and up at the immovable skylight.

"I guess you're right, Nick, but it's mighty mysterious," he remarked. "It must have been done in the early hours of the night. Fiske evidently was smoking and reading his newspaper. He would not have been sitting here, however, without having made sure that no other person was in the flat."

"I admit that."

"How did the crook get in, then? How could he have caught Fiske napping, and how killed him without a struggle and without leaving a sign of violence on his person?"

"Those are the very questions for which we must find answers," said Nick. "We must find out how it was done, and secure the evidence with which to prove it, before getting after this man Rogler. That's why I let him go without revealing my suspicions. There's nothing in plunging after him until we have the necessary evidence. We'll now set about finding it."

Convinced that he was on the right track, that his deductions were correct, and that the flat had in some way been stealthily entered, Nick Carter was not long in finding the evidence he wanted.

In a pantry adjoining the kitchen was a narrow window in which the panes were of small size, and on one of which Nick discovered a faint oily smooch near the lock. Close inspection revealed that it was on the outside of the glass. Raising the window, he discovered that the putty was fresh and soft.

"Here we have it," he said, turning to Chick. "This pane of glass was removed in order to reach the lock, and afterward reset and cleaned, probably with a design to have it appear that the flat was not entered, and that Fiske either took poison or died of heart disease. Be that as it may, here's where his assailants entered. The pantry door must have been closed, preventing Fiske from hearing them."

"But the window is thirty feet from the ground," said Chick, glancing out. "How was it reached?"

"Not from below, but from above," replied Nick, who was making a careful inspection of the stone sill outside, and of the brick wall above the window. "Here are fibers of hemp on the sill, showing that a rope was used. On the brick wall above are numerous scratches, evidently caused by the toes of a man's shoes when he let himself down. The flat above must be vacant. We'll go and see."

Nick's conjecture was correct. Entering the third-floor flat with a picklock, they found it unoccupied and destitute of furnishings. On the kitchen floor, however, were traces of muddy feet, while on each side of the window casing were the marks caused by a cross-bar, to which a rope sustaining a heavy weight evidently had been secured.

"There's nothing to it," Nick remarked, upon finding this evidence. "The rascals were here early Tuesday evening. They probably had things all fixed to quietly enter after Fiske had arrived and made sure no intruders then were in his apartment. Naturally, he supposed the door was the only way by which they could enter. Just how they caught him before he could put up a fight is not material."

"How was he killed?" Chick questioned.

"Chloroform, perhaps, or smothered. An autopsy may shed some light on that. I'm going to force it out of Rogler, however, if possible."

"You are going after him at once?"

"As soon as I have notified the precinct station and turned these rooms over to the police," Nick declared. "In the meantime, however, you must head off his next move. He'll lose no time in making it."

"A move to realize on the stolen letters?"

"Exactly. He will reason that I may know more than he suspects, having already discovered that Fiske is dead, and that I may connect him with the crime. He knows nothing about my call on Julia Delmore, however, nor that I am informed of the character of the stolen letters. He will feel reasonably safe, therefore, in sending confederates to her. He will attempt to sell the letters before it is too late, therefore, hoping to secure the money before bolting for safer quarters, in case he should find himself hard pressed. I'll soon show him whether no man can get the best of him."

"And in the meantime——"

"You must see Julia Delmore," Nick put in. "Tell her what has occurred and fix up a scheme to meet the situation. Neither Rogler, nor any of his gang, may know her by sight, or any of her servants. You better take the butler's place temporarily and await a move by some of Rogler's gang. Just how they will tackle the job can only be conjectured. You can be governed by circumstances. Do what you think best, Chick, in order to recover the letters and secure the rest of the gang."

"Leave that to me, Nick. I'll find a way to do both," Chick said confidently.

"Be off at once, then, that there may be no slip-up,"

Nick directed. "I'll attend to all that should be done here. I'll phone you later at the Delmore residence, in case there should be need for further instructions."

"I understand," cried Chick, hurriedly departing.

CHAPTER VIII.

UNDER TRUE COLORS.

It was four o'clock that afternoon when Nick Carter, having taken all the steps thought to be essential to a successful termination of the case, arrived at Rogler's residence. It was a plain brick dwelling in Lexington Avenue, on a basement door of which, at one side of the rise of front steps, was the sign of the occupant: "Gustave Rogler. Physician and Chemist."

That this sign was chiefly a blind, however, and that the rascal had no legitimate business worth mentioning, Nick then had not a doubt. Nevertheless, cleverly disguised, he approached the basement door like one on ordinary business.

His ring was answered by Rogler himself, wearing a long, loose blouse, and carrying in one hand a huge meerschaum pipe.

"You're Mr. Rogler?" Nick said inquiringly.

"Yes. Will you come in?"

"If you can give me a little time. I wish to consult you about an analysis of some baking powder, a new brand of which I am going to put on the market. I want a certified analysis of it for advertising purposes. Can you provide me with it?"

"I think so," said Rogler. "Have you brought a sample of the powder?"

He was conducting Nick through a narrow, dimly lighted corridor. Their heels rang sharply on the smooth, cement floor. The sounds echoed uncannily from the bare walls, and a damp chill like that of a tomb pervaded the place. Not a sound came from the floors above. It was as if the house was deserted.

Rogler pushed open a heavy door lealing into a rear room.

Nick saw that it had no knob on either side. It appeared to be a swinging door, double-hinged, but it stopped short over the threshold, instead, and closed with a sharp, metallic click that fell with ominous import on his ears.

Rogler had led him into his laboratory. It was a long, narrow room with two screened windows, through which filtered the last rays of the sun then sinking below the high roof of a near building.

At one side of the room was a long, zinc-covered table, littered from end to end with articles required by a chemist, glass pipes, funnel, retorts, test tubes, Bunsen burners, and the like. The shelved walls near by were filled with a vast array of jars and bottles.

That part of the room nearest the windows, however, evidently was used for receiving visitors. A rug covered the floor. There were three chairs and a cloth-covered table, on which numerous medical, scientific, and chemical journals were lying. Several cheap pasteboard pictures adorned the walls.

"Take a chair—either one," said Rogler, while he laid his pipe on the table. "What name, sir?"

He sat down directly opposite the detective and crossed his legs. It brought his lifted boot in the sunlight—and Nick needed to look no farther for the man; or one of them, who had entered Fiske's apartment from the flat above. For the toe of Rogler's boot was marred and scratched, done when he let himself down the brick wall. Ground into the tip of the sole, moreover, were particles of mortar and red brick, plainly visible in the sunlight.

Nick Carter viewed them without a change of countenance.

"I think you know me by name," he replied.

"Indeed!" Rogler stared. "I don't recall your face."

"Now, perhaps, you will," said Nick, deftly removing his disguise and slipping it into his pocket.

Rogler did not stir, did not so much as wince.

"Yes, I know you now," he said steadily. "What is this—a joke?"

"If you so can take it," said Nick, smiling. "I thought I would show you, Mr. Rogler, that it is not so very difficult to get the best of you."

"Ah! Now you speak of it, I recall that I did say something of that kind," Rogler coldly answered. "Do not build, however, on a foundation you have not tested. In how far you have the best of me remains to be seen."

"Well, it doesn't matter," Nick replied. "I have, in fact, called to talk with you on a very serious matter, and with your knowledge of medicines, drugs, and chemistry, you can, I think, give me the information I require. I am investigating a mysterious fatality," said Nick. "I wish to learn whether you know of any way by which a man, seated alone in a room, could be stupefied and deprived of consciousness without anticipating it, by others not in the room."

"That is quite a problem," he said icily.

"Obviously, of course," Nick proceeded; "gas could be injected into the room. But the subject would smell gas, or if odorless, even, he might detect its effect upon him before losing his senses. Do you know of any means sufficiently subtle?"

"Deodorized chloroform."

"Is it possible to render chloroform odorless?"

"It is said to be," replied Rogler, with absolute composure. "The process by which chloroform may be deodorized, however, is not generally known. It was discovered, I believe, by a German chemist named Leibler, whom I once met in Berlin. I think he never has revealed the process, owing to the evil uses to which the substance might be applied. It would make robbery and murder mere child's play."

"Could a quantity of it be injected into a room in which a man was seated?"

"Easily."

"Would he succumb unconsciously to its effects?"

"Undoubtedly."

Nick drew up a little in his chair.

"Was that what you used, Mr. Rogler?" he asked.

"When?"

"When you killed that lawyer, Fiske," said Nick.

"Is he dead?"

"You know he is dead."

"Was he dead when I talked with you this morning?"

"You knew it then, also."

"You are making very bold assertions, Mr. Carter," Rogler's voice took on a venomous twang. "This has ceased to be—a joke."

"You bet it has," Nick replied. "We are down to bed rock, and I was never more serious. You said this morning, Rogler, that no man ever gets the best of you. Dare you repeat it?"

"I was just about to do so," Rogler said quickly.

"You were, eh?" Nick sternly questioned. "Let me inform you, then, that you were never more mistaken. I know just how great a knave you are, and how knavish a game you have been playing. You hid Canfield's stolen letters in my office, and Fiske, your tool, removed them the following morning. He refused to turn them over to you, and you killed him. You entered his flat through the pantry window, which you reached from the flat above. You removed a pane of glass in order to unlock the window, and replaced and cleaned it to head off detection. You——"

"Stop a moment," said Rogler, still apparently unmoved. "If you had gone a step farther and examined the skylight, Mr. Carter, you would also have found that one of the glass squares had been removed and replaced. You might then have inferred, very correctly, too, that it was through that opening that the substance was introduced which deprived Fiske of consciousness and sent him on the journey from which no man returns. Is there any other information that I can give you?"

Before the last was said, uttered with sinister, steadily increasing vehemence, Rogler's brows had gathered like frowning battlements over his glowing eyes. The last vestige of color had left his cheeks, but his paleness was not that of fear, for his features were hard-set and his expression threatening.

"Ah!" Nick exclaimed. "You admit it, then?"

"I admit nothing," snapped Rogler.

"But you carry the proof on your person."

"On my person?"

"The toe of your boots," said Nick, pointing. "You scraped the leather of both when descending the brick wall."

"Bah!" Rogler ejaculated. "What will it profit you to have come here and told me this? Do you suppose for a moment that I have not expected you, and that I underestimated you sufficiently to believe that you would not suspect me? Better men than you have failed to get the best of me. That is why, Carter, I have listened so patiently. That is why I have been—waiting for you."

"You should have waited in street attire, then, for you now are going with me," Nick sharply retorted.

"Going where?"

"To police headquarters."

"You are mistaken, very much mistaken," said Rogler, without stirring. "You will not take me to police headquarters."

"Won't I?"

"No. You have the boot on the wrong leg, Mr. Carter."

"What do you mean by that?"

"I mean that—you are the man under arrest."

"Am I? We'll see."

Nick whipped out a pair of handcuffs.

"That's right—we'll see. Behold!"

Rogler clapped one hand upon the arm of his chair.

Instantly the four pasteboard pictures on the wall dropped to the floor.

Back of each was an opening in the wall about a foot square. Through each opening protruded a revolver, aimed straight at the detective's head. Back of each revolver appeared a man's threatening face, with lips drawn, and eyes gleaming over the leveled weapons.

"Don't move, Carter," Rogler sternly commanded. "If you do—you'll never move again."

CHAPTER IX.

THE MASTER CROOK.

If Nick Carter was surprised by the threatening turn of affairs, he in no way betrayed it. He met the situation as calmly and coolly as if he had expected it. He glanced from one threatening face to another, and then at Rogler's hard-set countenance, saying curtly:

"Ah, I see! Now, Rogler, you are flying your true colors. You have opened your portholes."

"Yes, with guns trained," Rogler darkly nodded. "Do you think it wise to invite their contents? Move foot or finger, Carter, and you'll receive the entire broadside."

"I'll take your word for it, Rogler, though your word ordinarily is not worth much," Nick retorted. "Nor could I doubt the villainous faces of the men behind the guns. I think too much of my precious skin to take such desperate chances. I'm quite at your disposal—temporarily."

"Permanently," snapped Rogler sharply. "I shall convince you of something you appear to have doubted—that no man ever gets the best of me."

"Possibly."

"You shall see. Sit still, or—well, you know the alternative."

Rogler turned one swift glance at his confederates.

"Two of you, Dacey and Black, keep him covered," he commanded. "You, Payson, come round here."

The face of one of the rascals vanished from the opening. Presently he appeared at a door in one end of the room, into which he hastened—a dark-featured, bearded man apparently in the fifties, whom Nick quickly detected was in disguise.

Rogler, without turning, said sharply:

"Fasten these irons on him, Payson, with his hands behind him. Give him a taste of his own medicine."

"I'm quite familiar with it," Nick curtly put in.

"You are less familiar with the dose I shall give you," Rogler retorted.

"Quite likely," Nick admitted indifferently.

He offered no resistance, but allowed Payson to draw his arms back of him and secure the handcuffs on his wrists.

"I shall do the same with you, my man, a little later," he remarked, with a glance at the frowning scamp.

"You will?" Payson sneered derisively. "You have about as much chance of doing that, as I have of growing wings."

"Hoofs and horns are what you'll grow, Payson, when in the next world."

"You're already as good as in it."

"Is that so?"

"Wait and see. Now he's fast, Gus, and you may do what you like."

"Get his weapons," Rogler commanded.

Payson hastened to obey, taking two revolvers from Nick's pockets and slipping them into his own.

Rogler arose and turned to the man called Dacey, who still was gazing through the opening in the wall.

"Fix the lift," he directed. "We'll transfer him at once to safer quarters, lest some of his kennel hounds show up here. Whether they do, or not, they'll never be able to find him."

Nick Carter heard, but he was borrowing no trouble on that score. He had other strings to his bow.

Dacey disappeared, while Rogler swung round, adding:

"It was very considerate in you to come here in disguise, Carter, for none will have recognized you, nor be able to identify you as my visitor. I appreciate it."

"Make the most of it," said Nick dryly.

"I shall," Rogler said shortly. "Don't think for a moment that my plans are not carefully laid to meet every contingency. Already, moreover, they are being executed."

"They'll not prevent your being executed sooner or later, take my word for that," declared Nick, with grim assurance.

Rogler ignored the ominous prediction.

"There'll be nothing here to-morrow to show what has transpired," he went on, as if there had been no interruption. "The house will be vacant, my paraphernalia removed, the occupants gone—but none will know where."

"There is not a rat hole in the world, Rogler, deep enough and dark enough to hide you from me," said Nick sternly. "If I live—I'll find you."

"Bah!" Rogler's frown became a malevolent scowl. "I'll make sure, then, that you don't live."

"Do so," Nick coolly advised. "That's your only safeguard."

Rogler again ignored him. He waved Payson aside, then turned to a cabinet on one of the walls and opened a drawer. Out of it he took a hypodermic syringe and a small vial filled with a dark fluid. Stepping to the screened window, he proceeded to charge the syringe, carefully measuring the quantity of fluid.

Nick watched him from under his knit brows, wondering whether the rascal's threat was to be immediately executed. He began to think that he had, perhaps, taken too long a chance against such a merciless scoundrel, to whom human lives appeared no more than dead leaves.

Payson gazed in silence, with a look of grim awe in his evil eyes. There was, in fact, something awe-inspiring in the deliberation, the assurance, the cold-blooded indifference with which Rogler talked of crime and death, or proceeded with his knavish work. The darker the deed, the less feeling he displayed, and the more terrible he appeared.

Presently, turning from the window, he walked back of Nick's chair. Without a word, and while Nick did not deign to bestow so much as a glance upon him, he laid one hand on the detective's head, bending it to one side. Then, with a quick turn of his wrist, he thrust the needle into Nick's neck and emptied the syringe.

Nick Carter did not shrink. Not a muscle moved in his powerful figure. But a tingling sensation shot through him from head to foot. He felt for a moment as if his blood boiled, and then there came a chill like that of death. The room began to whirl round and round. He lost sight of Payson's grim face, of the reeling walls, of the bright windows—all suddenly vanished, and there fell upon him the gloom of utter oblivion.

Gazing at the lax figure in the chair, nearly as ghastly as that on which Nick had gazed that morning, Payson caught his breath, and asked hoarsely:

"Is he dead?"

"No. Drugged." Rogler's answer was curt and cold. "Call Dacey and Black. Take him to the lift and transfer him to your place."

"With the other?"

"Yes. It will be convenient, in case I find that both must be disposed of. Besides, I'll have the woman there to-night."

"Is there no risk?"

"Not from that quarter. Only she and Canfield knew of the letters—and we have him. He cannot have disclosed anything, and I know that she has not."

"It's all right, then."

"But the game has become too hazardous to permit of delay," Rogler added. "The last trick must be quickly turned. She will jump at the opportunity offered her."

"Who is to bring her there?"

"The girl."

"She is about it?"

"She will be. She has my instructions. Do what I have directed and await my coming."

"All of us?"

"Yes. Thank your stars, too, that there is one less in it—though the treacherous cur has caused us all this trouble. I will come after dark. Set about it."

Dacey and Black had entered, and Payson no longer demurred. The three men raised Nick from the chair, then bore him from the room by the way they had entered.

Rogler watched them until the closing door shut them from his view.

If Nick Carter could have heard his interview with Payson, he would have known with what an iron will this knave ruled his confederates. If he could have seen what speedily followed, moreover, he would have realized how little some of them really knew about him, by what devices he kept them in ignorance for his own protection, and how true Langley had spoken of his craft, cunning, and resources.

Scarce ten minutes had passed when the doorbell rang noisily. Rogler started out of the chair in which he then sat smoking. Darting to a cupboard in one corner, he removed his blouse and put on a long black coat, then deftly adjusted a disguise which turned him, apparently, into a bearded man of sixty. All was accomplished in less than a minute, and then he hurried with bowed figure through the corridor and answered the bell.

Presently, he returned with a slender, thin-featured girl in the twenties, whose shifty gray eyes alone were enough to reveal her crafty nature. She was laughing when she entered, and appeared exultant over having accomplished something.

"I have made good, old man," she was saying. "I've got away with my duds, all right, and none the wiser."

"The housekeeper?" questioned Rogler tersely.

"She isn't wise. Canfield hasn't showed up, you see, and she had no reason for suspecting me. I told her I'd got a new job, and was going to quit. She thinks Canfield must have gone out of town."

"He may go farther," Rogler grimly declared. "Very well done, Maggie, I'm sure."

"I thought you'd say so," nodded the girl. "I crammed all of my stuff in a trunk and got it away by express. There'll be no tracking me, now, by my clothing."

"Very good; very good," Rogler repeated. "Now about the other matter. You are sure of my instructions?"

"Dead sure! I've got them down pat."

"Good again."

"It's up to you to say when."

Rogler glanced toward the windows.

"It will be dark in half an hour," said he. "You may go at once."

"Good enough! I'll show up with her at Payson's not later than eight o'clock."

"I'll be there," said Rogler.

CHAPTER X.

CLOSING IN.

When Maggie Doane, for it was Canfield's treacherous servant who had visited Rogler, left the chemist's house and hastened down Lexington Avenue, she was presently picked up and stealthily followed by—Patsy Garvan.

For Nick Carter's deductions had proved entirely correct—that Rogler, having Canfield in custody, would feel perfectly safe in sending Maggie Doane after the garments she had left in his house, and in losing no time in attempting to blackmail Julia Delmore.

An hour later the girl was approaching the home of the heart-burdened heiress who had appealed to Nick Carter for aid and advice.

Patsy Garvan easily anticipated her destination, and he got there before her. When the girl ascended the steps and rang the bell, Patsy was crouching under a baluster rail, scarce six feet from the front door, bent upon learning her mission.

The bell was answered by the—temporary butler.

"Holy smoke!" flashed through Patsy's mind. "If that isn't Chick, in disguise, I'll eat my hat. Nick has framed up some scheme since I left them."

Maggie Doane in the meantime was saying glibly:

"Is Miss Delmore at home? I'm sorry I haven't a card, but you may say that I call on a matter of importance. I am very anxious to see her."

"I will inform her," Chick bowed stiffly.

Maggie waited, nervously tapping the marble steps with the toe of her boot.

Patsy also waited, crouching lower.

Chick returned after a few moments.

"You may come in," he said sedately. "Miss Delmore will see you."

Maggie Doane entered and was conducted into the library.

Patsy Garvan stole around the nearest corner of the house and made a bee line for the kitchen door.

Julia Delmore gazed inquiring at the girl who had entered, while Chick closed the library door—and then knelt with his ear at the keyhole.

"Take a chair, young lady," said Julia, without rising. "What can I do for you?"

"You're Miss Delmore?" Maggie inquired.

"Yes."

"Good enough. But 'tain't what you can do for me, Miss Delmore, that brings me here. It's what I can do for you."

"For me?" Julia appeared surprised.

"That's what," Maggie nodded impressively.

"Explain. I don't understand you."

"You have lost something, haven't you? Mind you, I ain't saying what."

"Yes, I admit that I have lost something," said Julia, evincing an increasing interest.

"You know what I mean, then?" questioned Maggie discreetly.

"Yes, I think so."

"Want 'em back?"

"Very much."

"I've called to tell you how you can get them."

"Who sent you here?"

"Not the man who stole them from you. He hasn't them now."

"Are you sure of it, that they are in the hands of some one else?" Julia eagerly demanded—she was acting under Chick Carter's instructions.

"Dead sure of it," nodded Maggie. "They're in the hands of a party who'll use you right."

"What do you mean by right?"

"You offered the other a fat wad for them," said Maggie inelegantly. "You can buy 'em, all right, from the party who now has 'em."

"Ah, I see! They're for sale, then."

"That's just the size of it. But you'll have to go with me and see him, so as to fix it up."

"Go where?"

"Not far. You'll be back here safe and sound in a couple of hours."

"Why doesn't he come here?"

"Never mind. It's up to you to do our way—or not at all."

"But I don't see just why he will not come here. I will not have him arrested, nor——"

The doorbell rang noisily, and Maggie Doane swung round as if struck with a weapon, and stood listening.

Presently, after knocking on the door, Chick entered with a card on a silver tray. It appeared to be the card of a visitor.

Miss Delmore took it and read:

"Betray no surprise. Consent to go, but say you must change your dress. Then join me on the back stairs."

Julia Delmore read it without a change of countenance, then replaced the card on the tray and said indifferently:

"Tell Mr. Fanfarlie that I am engaged this evening and cannot see him. Express my regret."

Chick bowed and withdrew, and a moment later the front door closed noisily and Miss Doane resumed, again at ease.

"Well, what do you say?" she asked.

"Is there no other way?" questioned Julia doubtfully. "I dislike going out in the evening."

"You'll be all right. I'm going with you."

Miss Delmore demurred a little longer.

"Are you telling me the truth?" she asked.

"Am I?" Maggie demanded. "That's what I am, and you can bank on it. You'll get what you want, too, if you go with me, and will do the right thing."

"I'm inclined to believe you, for I know that the person who robbed me has been absent from home for several days. I have tried to reach him by telephone."

"Oh, you'll find I'm giving it to you straight," said Maggie. "There would be nothing for me in coming here with a lie."

Miss Delmore arose abruptly, with a look of sudden determination.

"I'll go with you," she said firmly. "But I must change my dress and put on outside garments. I'll not keep you waiting very long."

"Go ahead, then," nodded Maggie. "I'll wait."

Miss Delmore hastened from the room.

Maggie Doane waited about fifteen minutes. She then heard the returning steps on the stairs. She stepped into the hall and felt no misgivings upon seeing Miss Delmore clad in a long plaid cloak, with her hat and head enveloped in a thick, black veil.

"Come," she said nervously, while she buttoned her gloves.

"You're all ready, eh?" queried Maggie.

"Yes, all ready."

CHAPTER XI.

A SUCCESSFUL RUSE.

It was nearly eight o'clock when Maggie Doane and her companion left the Delmore residence.

Before the two women had reached the street, a man stole around the house and stealthily followed them. He no longer wore any disguise. The man was Chick Carter.

Half an hour brought the treacherous servant to her destination. Leaving a street near the water front, she conducted her veiled companion into a narrow court, at one end of which was a yard and boathouse close upon the river. Over a gate leading into the yard was a sign—"J. Payson. Sail Maker. Boats to Let."

Near by was a wooden house, the ground floor of which was used for a shop. The tenement above was entered by a side door, at the top of a flight of stairs outside of the house. The locality was inferior, the surroundings far from inviting.

The two women mounted the stairs and Maggie Doane knocked on the door.

They no sooner had entered than Chick Carter arrived at the base of the stairs.

In a front room of the house, just before the arrival of the two women, four men were seated—Gustave Rogler and his three confederates.

Rogler sat at a table, the others in chairs near one of the walls.

The room was lighted with an oil lamp only, the rays from which shed a sallow light on the dismal scene. A curtain drawn aside from a broad doorway revealed a rear sitting room, only dimly lighted by the same smoky lamp. Bound in chairs and facing the front room were two men—Nick Carter and the knave responsible for all that had occurred—Joseph Canfield. The face of the latter was drawn and ghastly.

Nick Carter, however, appeared utterly unconcerned.

Rogler, still in disguise, sat gazing at Nick from under his knit brows. He had been coolly talking with the detective about the entire case. He appeared to have no doubt of its successful termination.

"Yes, you have sized it up very nicely, Carter, I'll give you credit for that," he was saying moodily. "But it is going to cost you your life."

"Possibly," Nick replied. "I shall not, however, shrink from taking my medicine."

"Dead, I shall not fear you. Living, you are a menace I should constantly fear."

"You are not alone, Rogler. There are others who fear me."

"No doubt. I shall do them a lasting service in removing you."

"I agree with you," Nick said dryly. "There is still one point, however, Rogler, which I wish you'd clear up for me."

"What is that?"

"When did you nail this wretch, Canfield? Was it when he went to your house last Monday night?"

"Yes. It was necessary to keep him quiet until we could get the coin for which he had plotted. I have not decided what we shall do with him."

Canfield's lips twitched nervously, but he did not speak.

"And about that mark on Fiske's door?" questioned Nick. "What was the meaning of that?"

Rogler smiled coldly.

"You are inquisitive," said he. "Still, I don't mind telling you. I was not sure which flat Fiske occupied, so I sent one of my men to find out. He marked the door with one of our symbols, that I might make no mistake."

"Ah, I see," Nick nodded. "I thought it was something of that nature. I'm obliged to you."

"Don't feel that way about it. You can make no use of the information."

"Nevertheless——"

Then came Maggie Doane's signal knocks on the outer door.

Rogler drew up quickly, with countenance changing.

"That's the girl," he said impulsively. "Draw that curtain, Dacey. You, Payson, admit her."

Both men hastened to obey, and Payson returned in about a minute, followed by Maggie Doane and her veiled companion. The latter paused a few feet from the table, gazing apprehensively around, but she did not lift her veil.

"There is nothing for you to fear," said Rogler, sharply regarding her while he motioned the two men back to their chairs. "We do not intend doing you any harm, Miss Delmore. You may have a chair."

"No, no, I prefer to stand," was the nervous reply. "Don't keep me here longer than necessary. Tell me what you want."

"I've told her, Gus," put in Maggie, dropping into a chair in one corner.

"Our business with you must be obvious," said Rogler, with sinister suavity. "We have a package of letters belonging to you, and which are of great value to you. You were heard to offer a hundred thousand dollars for them. Assuming that you are still of the same mind, we have brought you here to discuss the purchase of them. The business must be settled and the price paid by this time to-morrow."

"I know to what you refer, and admit the value of the letters," said the woman, still standing in a position to watch the entire group. "But how do I know that you are telling me the truth, that the letters really are in your possession?"

"They are here. You may examine them."

Rogler opened a drawer and coolly tossed the broken package of letters on the table.

The woman gazed at them through the meshes of her veil, but did not stir from her position.

"Suppose I refuse to consider your offer?" she said inquiringly.

"You will not refuse," replied Rogler, frowning. "There is another reason why you will come to our terms."

"Another reason?"

"Draw that curtain, Dacey," commanded Rogler, and when the scamp hastened to obey he quickly added: "The lives of these two men, Miss Delmore, depend upon your submitting to our demands."

She turned a little and looked at them, starting slightly, as if surprised.

There was a curious gleam deep down in Nick Carter's eyes. He gazed at the veiled woman, but did not speak.

She stood motionless for a moment, then slipped each hand into the side pockets of her long cloak.

"You now must see——" Rogler began, while Dacey resumed his seat.

"Yes, yes, I see," she interrupted. "I see what I was only waiting to see."

"What do you mean by that?"

"I mean this—that if one of you rascals stir, he'll be a corpse the next instant! I'll drop the first who moves!"

The voice from behind the veil, no longer the cleverly imitated voice of Julia Delmore, rang like a trumpet through the room. Two revolvers had leaped into view, covering the startled gang. With a quick backward toss of the head, the hat and veil was cast to the floor, revealing the stern face and threatening eyes of—Patsy Garvan.

He added a quick, shrill whistle to his threatening words. Fairly mingled with it came the crash of a breaking door, the thud of hurrying feet, and Chick Carter, closely followed by a sergeant of police and two patrolmen, rushed into the room.

"Eureka!" he shouted triumphantly, upon seeing Nick.

Maggie Doane had fainted, and every man of the gang, including Rogler, was completely staggered with amazement and dismay. Before one of them could pull himself together, much less offer any resistance, the police were upon them and clapping them in irons.

After the smoke had cleared away, however, there were snarls and threats and bitter imprecations. Only one of the gang, Rogler himself, appeared quite unconcerned over what had occurred. He turned to Nick, after the latter had been released, and said, with a sneer:

"Well, Carter, I'll take it all back."

"Take what back, Rogler," questioned Nick.

"That no man ever gets the best of me. But," he quickly added, "it is, as you said to me, only—temporary."

"Is that so?" Nick replied, a bit grimly. "I'll make doubly sure, then, that you don't give us the slip. Hitch him to your own wrist, sergeant, and keep him there till you land him in a cell. He's a slippery rascal. Take personal charge of him."

"If he gives me the slip, I'll eat him," growled Patrick Riley, the police sergeant.

Gustave Rogler smiled contemptuously.

"That was good work, Patsy, and you make a very creditable young lady," said Nick, laughing, while the policemen were hurrying the gang from the house.

"Gee! that part of it's all right, chief," grinned Patsy. "But these clothes of Miss Delmore are a mighty tight fit, and I'll not be sorry to shift back into my own."

"You shall go with me, then, to return these," said Nick, gathering up the stolen letters. "It will be worth something to witness her joy and relief. The police will look after the gang. They're booked for speedy punishment."

THE END.

After having read "The Purple Spot," you will surely want to read "The Stolen Groom; or, Nick Carter's Tire Clew," which will be found in the next issue of this weekly, No. 32, out April 19th. Why? Because Gustave Rogler escapes! and Nick Carter and his assistants are again forced to take up his trail. The narrative of their pursuit makes a story even more interesting than the one you have just finished.

A FROZEN CLEW;

Or, THE COLD STORAGE MYSTERY.

By ALDEN F. BRADSHAW.

CHAPTER VII.

SHERIDAN KEENE BOARDS THE "MOLLIE."

The beginning of a startling sequence of events, resulting from the conference between Inspector Watts and Sheridan Keene, occurred immediately after noon that day. Taking from his desk in the inspector's room a few articles for preparing an effective disguise, the detective left the headquarters building and went at once to the water front. There, after a few inquiries among the longshoremen thronging Atlantic Avenue, he succeeded in locating the fishing schooner *Mollie*, hauled well into the dock adjoining Long Wharf.

She was about the cut of craft that he had expected to find; a faded black schooner of small tonnage, strong with the odor of fish, and as dirty as well can be imagined. Evidently the fate befallen her owner was known aboard, for she had been hauled up next to the wharf, and lay with her sails furled, her hatch down, and a ragged flag drooping mournfully at half-mast.

Her forecastle was deserted; but Keene observed, seated aft on the wheel gear, the man evidently then in charge of the vessel. He was a middle-aged man, roughly clad in a seaman's garb, and with a countenance and general aspect well in keeping with the craft herself.

He looked up indifferently when Keene sprang down to the rail and came aboard, and vouchsafed only a nod when the detective walked aft and bade him good day.

"Are you the man in care of this vessel, sir, since the death of Captain Cavendish?" the detective then asked courteously.

"I guess so, matie, sence the cap'n's gone by the board," replied the seaman, with a voice as hoarse as if the gales of a decade had blown his vocal organs into a state of utter laxity. "I am the mate o' the vessel. Be you a reporter? There ain't been no less'n seven of ye aboard sence the cap'n croaked. Ye're wuss'n a crew o' pirates."

Keene laughed lightly, and discovered that the man was less repellent than he looked.

"No, I am not a reporter," he replied, in his genial way. "I am a detective, detailed by Chief Inspector Watts to investigate the circumstances involving the death of Captain Cavendish. We are not quite sure that he was not the victim of foul play, and I've come aboard to ask you to do me a little favor."

Though he gave but a glance at the badge the detective displayed, the seaman's eyes brightened noticeably. He quickly arose, saying heartily:

"'Fore Heaven, matie, I've thought the same thing myself. Ole Cap'n Cavendish wasn't a man to be caught in the hold with hatches down unless suthin' was wrong

aboveboard. Do ye a turn, eh? Aye, aye, I will, in that case, so be it I can. What might it be, matie?"

"First tell me your name, if you please?"

"My name is Jenkins."

"And mine is Keene," rejoined the detective affably.

"Now, Mr. Jenkins," he continued, "how well are you known at the North Hotel, where Captain Cavendish was in the habit of lodging when ashore?"

"Ain't known at all," cried Jenkins tersely. "I allus bunk aboard ship, sir, and as I've no habit of crookin' my elbow, I've had little use for the North Hotel."

"Was Captain Cavendish addicted to liquor?"

"Summut, sir."

"Does his daughter know you by sight, or any of the people who frequent the hotel?"

"I guess not, matie. I never was in there; and as for the cap'n's lass, he'd never have her aboard this dirty craft, for all she was named for her."

"This suits me admirably, Mr. Jenkins," Keene now explained. "The object I've in view is this: I suspect a man who lodges at the North Hotel of being guilty of a rather ugly piece of work. I am out to get the truth, if possible, and take the fellow into camp. I wish to visit the hotel for a day or two, and give the impression that I am one of this vessel's crew—the mate, for example."

"D'ye think you look like me?" demanded Jenkins, with an amused grin.

"No, you're better looking," laughed Keene. "You say you are not known at the North Hotel, however, and I easily can pass myself off for a fisherman, if not for the mate of the *Mollie*, providing you will loan me suitable garments, in security for which I will leave you these I am wearing. I've clothes that would serve for a common seaman, but a fisherman must needs smell of fish, you know. I want to borrow a few things that will serve that end, and if you will accommodate me, and keep mum over the whole business, I'll make it worth your while."

"Aye, aye, sir, I will!" exclaimed Jenkins, not slow to grasp the idea. "And I will keep as dumb as an oyster, nor will I take anything for the sarvice. Come below, sir; and I will fit ye out from keel to truck to ye own fancy. I'd do that much for the ole man, matie, who'd a better heart'n he had tongue, which ain't sayin' much to his credit, nuther. Come below, sir."

Keene followed the fisherman down the companionway and into a dingy, foul-smelling cabin, where he was given an assortment of equally odorous garments from which to choose. He made a selection, then he set about making certain facial changes, a process which Jenkins watched with wide and astonished eyes.

"What was the matter with Captain Cavendish?" Keene casually asked, while thus engaged.

"Matter with him, matie?"

"Was he in the habit of taking medicine?" asked Keene, without turning from a wavy mirror which he had found available on the cabin wall.

"Medicine, eh? 'Fore Heaven, matie, I never knew him to take but one kind of medicine. He took enough of that to float the *Mollie*, so be it 'twas in one basin."

"What was that?" asked Keene.

"Rum and molasses, sir."

"He enjoyed pretty good health, then, I take it?"

"Pretty good, eh!" exclaimed Mr. Jenkins, with a laugh as dry as a smoked herring. "Why, matie, I'd 'a' swore a oath the ole man 'u'd lived to be a hun'ard. He was tougher'n a oak cap'sn-bar, and as good on his feed as a hog i' the autumn. I often wondered where he stowed the cargo o' grub I've watched him get outside of."

"A heavy eater, eh?"

"Aye, aye, sir, he was."

"How will that do?" asked Keene, now swinging around from the mirror and looking the fisherman in the face.

Jenkins burst into a laugh of intense enjoyment.

"'Fore Heaven, matie, your own muther'd not know you," he cried, staring with ludicrous gaze at the changed face of the clever detective. "I'd swear you'd been a fisherman all the days o' ye life. Along with these ere togs, and the smell o' cod and haddock, the ole man himself would a signed you. Blowed if ye don't look more like me'n ye did, matie, which ain't much in ye favor."

Keene joined in the seaman's laughter, and now hastened to change his own garments for those he had selected, meantime giving Mr. Jenkins such cursory directions against disclosing this strategy as the case seemed to require. The man who issued from the cabin of the *Mollie* a little later and presently threaded his way among the stevedores and longshoremen on the wharf, in no respect resembled the clean-cut officer who had boarded the fisherman's craft a half hour before.

His face now wore the rough traces of service in wind and weather. His unkempt hair had grown an inch or more, and was covered with a slouchy tarpaulin, drawn low over his keen dark eyes. He wore a coarse gray shirt, a heavy reefer of faded blue, and a pair of soiled trousers, stuck here and there with dry fish scales, and which were tucked into a pair of long rubber boots strapped midway about his thighs.

There was, moreover, a slouch to his shoulders, and roll to his gait, and a habit of hitching up his baggy trousers higher on his hips, all eminently in keeping with the character Sheridan Keene had assumed.

He did not shape a course for the North Hotel, however, as he had intimated to Mr. Jenkins. Bearing off through Commercial and Market Streets, he lay a course as direct as possible for the building occupied by the Atlas Cold Storage.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE FIRST MATE OF THE "MOLLIE."

Instead of entering the office of the cold-storage company, Sheridan Keene hugged the building in passing the windows, and dodged suddenly into a narrow passage making to the side elevator and stairs. He did not fear recognition by any person he might encounter, but was anxious only that a man of his appearance might not be observed just then by the one against whom his operations were chiefly directed.

Mounting the stairs till he reached the third floor, he loitered about one of the side corridors until, from some quarter below, he heard the voice of the party he then was seeking. This was the young man named Weaver, whose duty of that day did not end until four o'clock. After considerable dodging about, the detective finally located him on the second floor, going his round of rooms for the last time.

Keene cornered him in one of the corridors, as he was about taking the elevator, and at once detained him.

"Belay a bit, my hearty!" he exclaimed. "I've lost

my bearings in these ere crooks and turns about here. Can you pilot me out?"

Weaver had started with some surprise upon beholding him, and the sight of another seaman, after the dismal tragedy of that morning, was not wholly agreeable.

"What are you doing here, anyway?" he demanded curtly. "Strangers are not allowed in here without a permit from the office."

"Steer me down there, then, and I'll get one," growled Keene. "I'm not here without business, messmate. I'm the mate of the schooner *Mollie*, whose cap'n was found dead here this morning."

"Oh, all right, then!" exclaimed Weaver. "I didn't know that. Take the elevator with me, and I'll show you the way to the office."

"Heave ahead, me laddie."

"Too bad about Cavendish, wasn't it?"

"Aye, aye, it was," nodded Keene, as he boarded the elevator.

Then, as Weaver seized the line to start the car, the detective laid a hand on his arm, and added softly:

"Let her go up, my lad, instead of down!"

"What do you mean?" gasped Weaver, startled by the expression in Keene's dark eyes.

"Run her up, lad, and I'll tell you. I want to go to the room where Cavendish died. I say, messmate," he added, when Weaver demurred; "you've an honest face and a good block on your shoulders. Can you keep a secret?"

"I can if need be," said Weaver, rather shortly. "At what are you driving?"

"This—let me whisper it in your ear!"

Keene bent nearer, and Weaver suddenly drew back, staring the detective in the face.

"Goodness!" he muttered, smiling, "I'd never have known you!"

"Take me up to the fish room, and I'll tell you why I am here," said Keene softly.

Weaver no longer hesitated, and presently the two men gained the corridor and the room desired. Both were deserted, and Keene at once explained the object of his visit.

"I am going to trust to your discretion, Weaver, and inform you of my suspicions," he said, closing the door of the room into which, despite the cold, the detective had signed for his companion to enter. "I want you to say nothing about the matter, however, until after I've ended my investigations."

"I certainly will not, sir," said Weaver readily.

"Your face assures me of that," nodded Keene. "The fact is, Weaver, I suspect this man Wagner of not being all aboveboard. I don't think he has told the whole truth, and I mean to force him to do so. Do you know where he is at present?"

"He was down in the engine room a few minutes ago, sir."

"How long before you go off duty?"

"In about an hour."

"Before then, there are two things I wish to accomplish, and in one at least I shall require your help. Above all things, however, do not betray in the presence of Wagner, or any third party, that you are informed of my identity. The least sign might give it away, you know."

"Don't fear that I will give it away, Detective Keene," Weaver quickly answered. "I am far too anxious to see Burton well out of this scrape to betray you by word or sign. You tell me what you wish me to do, and I will do it."

"Very good!" exclaimed Keene. "To begin with, I want you to let me lock you in this room; and, after I've had time to reach the elevator and go up to the top of the shaft, I want you to beat on the wall here with one of these fish, say a half dozen times, as forcibly as you are able. I wish to discover whether the sound can be heard from where Wagner claims to have been, when Cavendish was first locked in the room."

"I understand, sir."

"Let's be at it before we are interrupted."

"There is not much danger of that, sir," replied Weaver; "but I'm ready if you are."

"Get one of the fish, then, and get a heavy one. Give me half a minute in which to reach the elevator, and then bang hard. Not more than five or six strokes, mind you. I will secure the door, that the conditions may be the same."

"All right, sir. Wait a bit till I get my position, for it will be darker'n the devil in here after you close the door. Now go ahead!"

Keene closed and locked the heavy door when he passed out. Then he hastened to the elevator, and ran the car to the top of the shaft, which brought him within a few yards of the gear overhead. He waited in silence for a moment, and then there plainly sounded on his ears the dull thud of the heavy blows dealt by the man in the fish room.

"About what I expected," muttered Keene, springing down to the car. "Wagner lied like a pirate! Cavendish never struck a blow, after that door was closed upon him for the last time."

Quickly rejoining Weaver, the detective told him the result of the experiment, and again cautioned him against making any disclosures.

"There is one more thing in which I may require your help," he then explained. "Has Wagner any right to enter this room, or do you have entire charge of it?"

"Ordinarily, sir, the men are not allowed in the rooms, except when transferring stores," explained Weaver. "With Wagner, sir, it is rather different. His duty requires him to see that the pipes are in proper condition, and he frequently visits the rooms."

"That is all right, then!" exclaimed Keene. "In that case I shall not need you, and you'd better keep out of sight. I can easily make Wagner volunteer to come up here with me."

"How so, sir?"

Keene laughed.

"Don't you know that a guilty conscience will drive a man to almost anything?" he rejoined. "Now wait one moment while I prepare for him."

Weaver could not see what the detective did; he merely saw him stoop to the floor at one of the great bins of loose fish, those belonging to Cavendish, and quite near the spot where the seaman's body had been found. Then Keene rose erect, and said shortly:

"Now we're ready, Mr. Weaver. Be off about your own business, and leave Mr. Wagner to me."

Keene's next appearance in the case was in a corridor overlooking the engine room, in the basement of the building, where he stood about for several minutes, staring this way and that, like a man doubtful which way to

turn. That which presently occurred was precisely what he expected.

As if the presence there of another fisherman had instantly quickened his suspicions, Wagner came bolting up from the engine room the moment he beheld him, and quickly reached the corridor in which Keene was standing. He came through a door somewhat removed from the detective, and the latter at once hastened to meet him, as if glad to have run upon some person from whom he could obtain information.

"Beggee pardon, messmate!" he cried, hitching up his belt with one hand, and giving his tarpulin a jerk with the other. "Can't you set a covey right who's dead at sea in this 'ere building? Which way'll I bear to find the office?"

A mingling of distrust and apprehension was plainly manifest in Wagner's frowning eyes. Despite the searching scrutiny to which he was subjected, however, the detective felt sure of his disguise, and that the engineer's misgivings were rooted in some secret dread of his own.

For this reason, too, Keene was sure that Wagner would himself comply with the request he was about to make, rather than endure any uncertainty as to the true nature of his mission there, by turning him over to the guidance of a third party.

In response to the question asked by Sheridan Keene, the engineer quickly demanded:

"Who are you? And what are you doing here?"

"I'm the mate o' the *Mollie*, late Cap'n Cavendish, who was found dead here this morning," Keene glibly rejoined, with enough of a seaman's vernacular to sustain the character assumed.

"The mate of the *Mollie*, are you?"

"Aye, aye, sir, I am," nodded the detective. "But I'm not lookin' arter Cavendish, far from it, messmate! I only want to find the room where the old man's fish are stored."

"What do you want in that room?" demanded Wagner, whose suspicions were not easily allayed.

"Just to see how they run in weight, sir, and what part o' them are blues," Keene readily explained.

"But for what reason, my man?"

"You see, sir, the cap'n sold a half a ton, or nigh that, only yesterday. Some on 'em must be delivered afore Saturday, and I want to l'arn what's got to be took from here, to make up what I've got aboard the vessel."

"Why didn't you call at the office?"

"I meant to ha' done so, messmate," replied Keene, who was by no means an easy man to corner; "but I missed the door, and shaped my course in here, and now I'm at dead reckoning."

"Well, I guess you are all right," Wagner now observed, less censoriously.

"If you'll show me the way to the office, I'll get the consent——"

"What do you wish to do in the room—merely look over the fish?" interrupted Wagner, thoroughly hoodwinked by Keene's plausible story, and the artful fluency with which it was told.

"Aye, aye, matie, that's all."

"You don't wish to remove any?"

"Not afore Saturday, sir."

"You will need a permit to do that."

"Aye, sir, so the cap'n told me afore this. Just now I only want to clap my peepers on the size o' the fish, and the different kinds I'll heave no one to for long in doing that, sir."

"I will show you the room, then," said Wagner, now drawn into the net. "Come out this way."

"Heave ahead, sir!"

And with a roll and a swagger Keene fell in at the heels of the engineer, who now led the way to the elevator, on which they started for the fifth floor.

"This 'ere beats runnin' up ratlines in a gale o' wind and an ugly sea!" laughed Keene, referring to their easy ascent. "'Tain't much like climbing aloft on shipboard."

"I suppose not," growled Wagner, with a furtive glance at his companion's swarthy face. "Come this way."

"So this 'ere was where they found him, eh?" observed Keene, when they entered the icy storeroom.

"Yes, this is where they found him."

"'Fore Heaven, matie, I'd never ha' dreamed he'd come to an end like that."

"The end of all of us is uncertain."

"Avast a bit, matie!"

"What now?"

"I say, sir! Where was he lying?"

"Never mind where he was lying!" forcibly rejoined Wagner, who found the remarks distasteful, and whose face had grown quite pale. "Do you think I, too, want to freeze here? Look over your fish, if you like, and then get out!"

"Aye, aye, sir! Beggee pardon, sir!" Keene now exclaimed, humbly twigging his tarpaulin. "I meant no harm, matie; my word for it. I was only wondering where the old man——"

"Get at your work!"

"Aye, aye, sir! This 'ere was the old man's bin, I know by the fish. Steady, matie, and lay to a bit. I'll not be long about it."

While Wagner watched him with steadfast gaze, the detective clambered into the bin of frozen fish, hauling over a few here and there, and apparently estimating with experienced eyes the quantity and quality of each variety.

Then he clambered out again, and fell to sorting those which had slid out from the bin, like so many chunks of icy wood, pitching one here and tossing one there, and now and then accompanying his movements with a remark to which Wagner appeared to give no weight, if indeed, attention.

Presently, however, Keene growled out, with grim disapproval:

"What's this 'ere? Glass 'mongst the fish! A devil of a place for that to be knocking about!"

And without a backward glance, and with no apparent interest in Wagner, he flirted across the floor the empty vial he had found that morning.

The engineer pounced upon it like a terrier on a rat.

That the cork was missing, seemed instantly to explain why the bottle was empty, and a gleam of intense satisfaction fired the man's crafty and treacherous eyes.

Yet his involuntary eagerness had been so obvious that his companion, of whom Wagner really had no considerable suspicion, quickly started up and looked to see what the object might be.

"It's nothing!" exclaimed Wagner, recoiling slightly, when Keene so abruptly approached him.

"What was it, matie?"

"Only an empty bottle.

"Let's see it! Let's see it, matie!" persisted Keene.

"If it's only an empty bottle, what need to stow it away in your hand. Let's see it, I say!"

"There 'tis! See for yourself!" cried Wagner, frowning darkly.

"Aye, aye, matie, that's right!"

"It belongs to me, as far as that goes! And there's the mate to it, only it's full. It's some medicine I'm taking."

And the poor wretch, artfully made the tool for his own undoing, in his eagerness to quell any misgivings on the part of this ostensible seaman, drew from his vest pocket a similar vial, which he had purchased since losing the other, and displayed them both in the palm of his tremulous hand.

"Aye, aye, that's all right, matie!" Keene repeated heartily, with a wave of his hand. "I only thought it might ha' been suthin' the old man had dropped. Keep 'em, matie! I've no use for 'em!"

And Sheridan Keene turned back to his work at the bin, yet viewed askance, and with secret satisfaction, the disposal of both vials in the pocket of the engineer.

"That beats hunting up a druggist for the purpose of fixing the dog's identity!" the detective said to himself, as he concluded his work at the edge of the bin.

"Now then, matie, I'm ready to be off!" he said, rising at the end of five minutes, and rubbing the ice and fish scales from his hands.

"Got all through?"

"Aye, aye, matie, and many thanks for the sarvice."

"You needn't feel that way about it. We'll go down as we came."

"Shall I heave ahead, sir?"

"Yes, go on! It's too cold to stand about in here."

"So 'tis, sir, for a fact," cried Keene; then he turned back from the open door to add, with a rather grim smile:

"The old man would ha' kept for many a day, matie, had they let him lie where they found him!"

"That's enough of that!" replied Wagner, yet he now showed no resentment. "Go on with you! I've work to do below."

"All right, sir! Beggee pardon! beggee pardon a thousand times!"

And Sheridan Keene hitched up his trousers higher on his hips, and with a roll and a swagger that might have been those of a genuine old salt, turned his steps in the direction of the corridor, that morning the scene of an inquiry which led to these very moves.

Wagner closed and secured the door after they had passed out, and signed for his companion to go in the direction of the elevator, with which the latter readily complied.

The secret satisfaction of the engineer in the recovery of the vial was greater than he could easily hide, and it at once betrayed that he had feared some trouble from it.

His relief showed in his face, which had now lost its grim distrust of his companion. It sounded in his voice, and appeared in the more genial and friendly manner with which he responded to Sheridan Keene's remarks as they descended to the street floor.

It was, indeed, as if he felt that this fisherman had really done him a material favor when he discovered it at the edge of the bin containing the dead man's frozen fish, and brushed it out where he could lay hands upon it.

So pronounced were these feelings, in fact, that, having escorted Sheridan Keene to the street door, Wagner heartily shook hands with him in parting, and said he hoped they soon might meet again.

Keene did not tell him that he felt quite sure they would.

TO BE CONCLUDED.

MR. SNIFFIN'S OPOSSUM.

By MAX ADELER.

They employed a new reporter named Sniffin on the *Argus* the other day, and he was sent out to hunt up some items. After a while he returned with one, and handed it for inspection to the editor, Colonel Bangs. It was entitled "An Extraordinary Occurrence."

When the colonel had read it, he sent for the reporter, and said to him:

"Mr. Sniffin, did this thing happen exactly as you state it?"

"Why, of course," said Sniffin.

"You saw it yourself, I suppose?" asked the colonel.

"Oh, yes; certainly."

"Well, Mr. Sniffin, it certainly is the most extraordinary occurrence of the century. You say that the boy was up the tree, and that while he was engaged in taking the apples the 'short-horn opossum, which was hovering over the tree, flew at him and beat him with its wings, and tried to pick out his eyes with its horny beak.' Now, Mr. Sniffin, the most ordinary familiarity with natural history would have informed you that the opossum has no wings, that it cannot hover over a tree, and that its beak is not horny. Children usually know these things. If I should put that in my paper, Delaware, to-morrow, would ring with shrieks of laughter.

"And then you go on to say that 'when the boy struck the infuriated bird,' referring to the opossum, of course; this is simply maddening—'when the boy struck the infuriated bird to the earth it was instantly seized by a crane, which was browsing in the meadow close at hand. The opossum fastened its talons in the mane, which hung from the neck of the crane, and the latter, balancing itself upon its hind legs, held its victim in its teeth and strove to kill the opossum by striking it with its front hoofs. The combat ended by the crane killing the bird; and then, as the boy descended from the tree, the crane walked gently away, nibbling the grass and whisking off the flies with its flowing tail.' Mr. Sniffin, did I understand you to say that you saw the whole of that transaction with your own eyes?"

"Well, I—that is—I——"

"Oh, no matter! it is immaterial, sir. Testimony from a man who talks about the hind legs of a crane, and accuses it of nibbling grass and having teeth, is not of sufficient importance to warrant the taking of much pains to secure it. Hind legs on a crane! Sniffin! I wish you'd sit down some time and throw together on a piece of paper your general idea of the appearance of a crane. Make a sketch of it. I want to preserve it as a curiosity. But I am afraid I'll have to drop you off the staff. You are not promising as a reporter. People are getting particular now about the kind of reading that they find in newspapers, and your style makes 'em mad and bilious. If I keep you on I don't know but what some day when I'm away you'll

go to crowding in something about two-legged mules with feathers, or anacondas spinning their webs in the garret, or sheep storing the honey in their hives, or Shanghai roosters tearing somebody limb from limb and flying to their nests in the mountain crag with their booty. It won't do, Mr. Sniffin, it really won't. The public are too fastidious. So, I'll excuse you now, if you want to leave. Good morning." Mr. Sniffin then left. He is now opening oysters.

BLUSHING.

Blushing is caused by the circulatory, respiratory, and digestive system of the human body. Though their functions are involuntary, they are still to a very great degree affected by the action of the nervous system. Now the nervous system is susceptible to two kinds of stimuli—physical and mental.

Physical stimuli include external excitants of various nature—such as light, heat, sound, odor, and also chemical and galvanic irritants. Mental stimuli are the result of exercise of the will and thought, and also of the powerful and sudden emotions, the various emotions acting through the nerves, affecting the circulatory system differently. Joyful emotions accelerate the action of the heart and cause the dilation of the arterioles and capillaries to receive the added current.

Sudden terror or fear, on the contrary, causes a spasmodic contraction of the heart, and a simultaneous contraction of the small arteries, so that the face becomes blanched and the hands icy cold.

The capillaries, or the small blood vessels which connect the arteries and veins, are affected by anything which affects the circulatory system through the nerves. These small vessels form a network over the entire body so close that the point of the finest needle cannot be inserted between them.

Thus, in blushing, a mental emotion has accelerated the circulation and dilated the capillaries on the surface. The blood then rushes into them in such quantities that they become visible, not as a network—they lie too close together for that—but as a uniform flush upon the skin. The reason why some persons seldom or never blush is because, through constitutional or acquired power, their nervous systems are more or less independent of emotional stimulus.

Shame, joy, fear, or horror, excites in them but little emotion; and besides, such degree of emotion as may be excited is so far under the power of the will that it is permitted to send out no electric currents to disturb the even movements of the circulation.

AN OBLIGING STRANGER.

It was dark, and down a retired street in Paris a man rode alone on horseback. Suddenly the horse stopped as if frightened. Then a man arose from the pavement in the middle of the street and jumped to one side with a cry. The rider was angry, and exclaimed:

"Are you drunk, man, that you lie about in the middle of a dark street and get yourself run over?"

"You might better lend a poor fellow a hand than scold in that way," exclaimed the other. "I had three hundred francs in gold in this bag, carrying it to pay a bill for my master, and the bag has broken, and it is all lost over the street. If you have any matches they will do me more good than your curses."

"It's no easy task to find lost money on a night like this," said the rider, dismounting. "I have no matches, but, perhaps, I can help you. Have you any of the pieces left?"

"Only one," replied the unfortunate fellow, with a sob.

"Give it to me," said the other.

The poor man hesitated, but the stranger repeated the words in a tone of authority, and the last coin was handed to him.

The stranger whistled, and a great Spanish mastiff stood beside him. He held the coin to the dog's nose, and leaning to the rough pavement, said:

"Find them."

The dog sniffed the gold piece and began the search.

One, two, three; he began bringing in the coins and dropping them into his master's hand, while the poor servant stood by in silent wonder.

Thirteen times he returned with a twenty-franc piece. Then, after a long search, he came back empty, with a grunt that seemed to say:

"There are no more."

"We are yet lacking one piece," said the stranger. "Are you sure there was just three hundred francs?"

"Sure as can be, sir," the servant replied.

"Then look in the bag again. There must be one left there."

"Oh, sir!" he exclaimed, as the stranger sprang into his saddle, "you are my deliverer. Tell me your name that my master may know who has done him such a service."

"I have done nothing," said the stranger. "Tell your master that one who helped you was a very good and intelligent dog by the name of Joie."

It was some years afterward, when France had seen troubled times and the royal family was no more, that the master was telling the incident to a party of friends, one of whom had been employed in the palace.

"Joie! Joie!" he exclaimed. "There never was but one dog of that name, and there never was a more remarkable and faithful dog than he. He always accompanied his master when he went in disguise about the city."

"Who was his master?"

The reply was brief: "The Emperor Napoleon."

A SWIM FOR LIBERTY.

A veritable escape was made in Australian waters, a few years since, almost as amazing as that of Edmond Dantes, in the novel of "Monte Cristo." It seems that the French transport steamer *L'Orne* had put into the lower harbor of Melbourne for coal and provisions. On board were five hundred Communists, bound for the French penal settlement of New Caledonia. The sentinels on duty were quadrupled in number, and the ship was kept brilliantly illuminated with lanterns. Boats were stationed at judicious distances, and all conceivable precautions taken to prevent any of the convicts from escaping. But by an extraordinary combination of courage, good fortune, and physical endurance, one Michel Serigne managed to effect his departure from the vessel and his arrival on shore, a distance of nearly nine miles; where, since there is no expatriation for political offenses, he walks to-day a free man.

Serigne, having watched his opportunity for several

hours, rolled out of a porthole into a collier, which had been brought alongside to furnish the steamer with coal. A guard, with a chassepot, was close by, but the prisoner executed his critical movement just as the sentry was moving from him, and before he turned. Serigne fell amid the coals, and, with great swiftness and dexterity, covered himself up among them. Here he lay until after midnight, his first descent having been made at about nine. He now stealthily lowered himself overboard and swam to the collier's stern, where a boat was fastened. Cutting the rope, he gently pushed the boat away, swimming behind it. The night was dark, there was no moon, and it rained.

When three hundred yards away Serigne heard a noise on board the steamer, and made up his mind his escape was discovered. He naturally inferred that the absence of the boat would be instantly noted, and that, if seen, she would at once be fired upon. He therefore instantly left her, dived well beneath the surface, and rose again some distance off. All was quiet again on board the ship, but he dared not return to the boat, and struck out for the shore. He could see the lights at Sandridge, but knew not how far they might be away. After swimming nearly an hour, he felt that he could continue no longer. Happily at this juncture he espied a vessel at anchor, and contrived to struggle to her cable. Fearing he should faint, and so sink, he lashed himself to the cable with his belt. For an hour or more he rested, and then disengaged himself, and again struck out for the shore. Greatly exhausted, he managed at last to gain the beach at Sandridge, and thence, in the morning, he walked into Melbourne. He had heard, he said, that having once touched English soil he was free, and so had no fear of being given up. On the line taken, it appeared that he must have swam nearly nine miles—the distance achieved by Dumas' marvelous hero when he escaped from the Chateâu D'If.

HEIGHT OF WAVES.

All sorts of nonsense has been written about waves "mountains high." The truth is that when a ship is plunging down the back of one wave and is at the same time heeled over till her rail is close to the water, the next wave looks as if it would sweep completely over the vessel, and, therefore, appears as big as a mountain. Lieutenant Qualtrough says: "We find reports of heights of 100 feet from hollow to crest, but no verified measurement exists of a height half as great as this. The highest reliable measurements are from 44 to 48 feet—in itself a very remarkable height. Waves having a greater height than 30 feet are not often encountered."

It is well known that in every storm there are occasionally groups of three or four waves considerably larger than the others. Captain Lecky is of the opinion that these are caused by the increased force of the wind in the squalls which are a feature of every big blow. Now, waves travel at a rate which is the result of their size. Waves 200 feet long from hollow to hollow travel about 19 knots per hour; those of 400 feet in length make 27 knots; and those of 600 feet rush forward irresistibly at 32 knots. Let us suppose, now, a wave 400 feet in length and 38 or 40 feet high rushing along 27 knots. It overtakes a slower wave making about 20 knots, with a height of 25 feet and a length of 200. The two seas become one, forming at the moment of their union an enormous wave. Just at that moment they meet one of those steamers called "ocean greyhounds," which, as every one knows, never slacken speed unless it is absolutely necessary for safety. She is butting into the storm at the rate of, say, 8 knots an hour. She runs plump against a great wall of water which seems to rise suddenly out of the general tumult, rushing at her with a height of 45 feet or more and a speed of over 30 miles per hour. There is a fearful crash forward, accompanied by a deluge, and, as the tons of water roll off the forecastle deck, it is found that damage has been done, and the officers on watch enter in the log the interesting fact that the steamer has been struck by a "tidal wave."

FALLING SMOKE.

Many a boy seeing the smoke from a chimney floating away has imagined that the smoke must be very light thus to rise so easily. Smoke is not so very light, and if it is cold it will fall down instead of rising. It is the heated air escaping from the chimney that carries up the smoke, and as soon as the heat is lost it will fall down again.

In some cities, like London or Pittsburgh, the smoke from the chimneys on cold, wet days falls down again and makes a disagreeable brown fog all over the town. To test this curious thing, take a small glass bottle or vial, and, holding it upside down in one hand, thrust a lighted match into it with the other. Close up the mouth as closely as possible with the fingers, and in a moment the match will go out and the bottle will be filled with smoke. Then draw out the match and set the bottle upright on the table, and the smoke, instead of rising and coming out, will be seen rolling about inside. In about a minute take the bottle up and hold it upside down in the hand and the smoke will slowly roll out and blow away. This shows that smoke is really heavy, and, when cold, will fall down like so much brown dust.

Another curious thing is shown by this experiment. Burning is a chemical operation that cannot go on unless there is plenty of oxygen in reach. This oxygen is an invisible gas in the air, and when we put the burning match in the bottle and closed its mouth the supply of oxygen was cut off. The oxygen in the bottle was soon used up, and then the flame went out. That is, the fire stopped and the light disappeared and the operation came to an end because one of the most important things, the oxygen, was missing.

This match and bottle experiment is quite easy and interesting.

ANCIENT ANTI-GOLF LAW.

Perth, where golf is now a municipal institution, is the city where the first act was passed forbidding the playing of "Golfe, futeball, or other sik unprofitable sportes." This was in 1424 and James I. was the culprit, directing his laws against his subjects while playing the game himself on the North Inch.

The golf club there is older by centuries than James VI., though it bears his name. When the monarch became James I. of England, he brought his liking for the game southward. He issued letters patent at Salisbury to William Bervick for the making of golf balls for twenty-one years. The reason would delight Mr. Bonar Law. It was to prevent so much British money going out of the country to pay for golf balls made in Holland.

THE NEWS OF ALL NATIONS.

Sixty Thousand Boys Became Scouts in Year 1912.

Proof that at least 60,000 boys joined the Boy Scouts of America in 1912 is presented by James E. West, chief scout executive, in his annual report which will be read to the members of the national council at the third annual meeting. It consists in the fact that 61,473 tenderfoot badges and tenderfoot patrol leaders' badges were issued in 1912, as against 47,500 in the previous year.

There are many more tenderfoots connected with the organization who have no badges, and who joined in the last year. Accordingly it is estimated that the actual number of new scouts enrolled in 1912 is much greater than is indicated by the number of badges sold.

Mr. West's report shows also that in 1912, 12,892 second-class badges and 2,991 patrol leaders' badges, making a total of 15,883, were sent out to the scouts in the course of the year as compared with 6,384 of the previous year. The total number of first-class badges and patrol leaders' badges for 1912 amounted to 3,115 as compared with 2,667 in the previous year.

In the year 1912, twenty boys in the United States became Eagle Scouts and their names are enrolled in the national headquarters of the Boy Scouts of America. To become an Eagle Scout, a boy must show special aptitude. He must go through the different degrees of tenderfoot, second-class and first-class scouts. The tests for those degrees require alertness, skill in the training of the body and the mind, good character, and ambition. The boy must qualify as having a certain amount of knowledge in twenty-one different activities.

College Trainer Big Asset.

The value of a college trainer's service is beyond compute. This was shown several years ago when Cornell presented Charlie Courtney, the clever rowing coach, with a house and later the same institution gave Jack Moakley, the trainer, a similar gift.

While both of these may seem great, the conferring on Keene Fitzpatrick of honorary memberships in the senior classes of Princeton is a tribute such as a trainer has seldom, if ever, enjoyed.

Scouts in Hawaii Do Odd Tricks.

The Boy Scouts of America are rapidly increasing in Honolulu, Hawaii. An encouraging report has been received at the national headquarters concerning the work there from J. A. Wilder, scout commissioner. One of the most important features is the fact that the Catholics are taking up the movement and have a priest as a scout master. Governor Frear has reviewed the scouts, and said that he regards the boys as part of the assets of Hawaii.

"My troop, which is Number Five," writes Wilder, "is now thirty-five strong—four patrols—full up and perhaps you'll wonder if I am busy or not! Each four boys have a separate locker, tent, and outfit (such as it is), and will be held strictly responsible for the tools and kit allotted to them. 'Sand-papered and sharp' will apply to shovel, pick, and ax. We have two carts—kitchen and tentage. We wheel the one alongside the fire and lift off a tight-fitting lid. This gives us a 'pantry on the spot. The other is a British kit cart and comes to pieces, making a ladder, stretcher, windlass, or table. We have as yet not had a 'go-light' hike, as the troop is not yet ready with knapsacks or mess kits, and going light in this climate is for the uninitiated equivalent to going wet and hungry.

"Mr. Maxwell, an old-time prospector, of New Zealand and Australia, taught us the twister, damper, or chupaltry—old names which stand for bread baked on a stick and in the ashes. He showed us how to serve a dinner of four courses, served piping hot, without any utensils save his tomahawk, knife, and 'billy'; kabobs, spuds, bread, and tea—the regulation Australian outdoor meal, was done with such ease, with such technique, as hardly to bedew his forehead, although it was a warm day. The usual fussing, burns, grass afire, and collisions were *non est.* My troop was deeply impressed!

"As for other scouting activities, we are doing the regulation stunts. We number seven second-class scouts and will soon have a few first class."

Wool Business Had a Prosperous Year.

Despite serious labor troubles, the woolen manufacturing industry prospered in 1912, according to reports of officers presented at the annual meeting of the American Wool Manufacturers' Association. President John P. Wood, of Philadelphia, declared that "the minds of the advocates of tariff for revenue only are made up and cannot be changed by any statements of American business men."

He predicted that the Underwood wool bill will be introduced in the extra session of Congress in its original form. "It is improbable," he added, "that any marked changes will be made in the bill, in the course of its consideration by the Senate."

The Elevators of the Ancients.

Cæsar, Brutus, and others among the ancient Romans would not feel themselves so out of place were they to walk into San Francisco or New York. The modern elevator, also the radiator were known to the Romans of the first civilization. So Professor Boni, the famous archeologist assures us.

Commenting upon the fact that three large elevators have been rediscovered in the palace of the Cæsars on the Palatine Hill—one of these with a shaft 120 feet high—Professor Boni says:

"Discoveries like these make one realize how little the world has changed in habit or achievements since the days of the old Romans. Take the matter of water supply and baths. There has been found near Pompeii a Roman house in which is installed a first-rate hot-and-cold-water system. The occupants could turn on hot or cold water, or both, just as in a modern house; and this was toward the end of the first century, A. D.

"A mode of bathing remarkably like the modern Turkish bath is described by Celsus, a writer on the art of medicine. He advises the bather to go first into a moderately heated room and perspire slightly, after which he should anoint himself and pass into a hot-air room. Having perspired there, he should pour hot, warm, and cold

water by turns over his head, then scrape himself with a strigil and finally anoint himself—this last process being probably a precaution against cold. The strigil was a curved piece of metal much used for cleaning purposes by the athletes and bathers of ancient Rome.

"The ancient Romans were good cooks and had advanced types of kitchen implements. At Pompeii was found an implement consisting of a long handle and a rectangular pan with twenty-eight circular depressions—used for baking cakes or poaching eggs.

"Few people recollect that the Romans introduced a system of heating their houses by hot air. The stokeholes were outside and were connected by shafts, by which air circulated under the floors and up inside the walls. Seneca, writing in the first century, regarded such a system as an enervating luxury, but by the third century it was in general use.

"As to articles of the 'toilet, we could teach the Romans but little. They had combs, razors, toothpicks, nail files (with a roughened surface and a smooth notch for polishing), mirrors, toilet boxes, scent bottles, pins, brooches, hooks and eyes. Of course, many of these things were much used long before the Romans; the principle of the safety pin goes back, for instance, to very antique civilizations."

Tells Stories Heard from Lincoln's Lips.

New and old Lincoln stories were told recently at the meeting of the New York Genealogical and Biographical Society by men who heard them originally from Lincoln's own lips. The speakers were General James Grant Wilson, Henry Clews, Colonel Albert B. Chandler, Charles A. Tinker, and David Homer Bates. The last three were connected with the telegraph station at the war department at Washington during the Civil War.

General Wilson began by telling of his first meeting with Lincoln in Illinois in October, 1858. He said:

"We found Lincoln occupying a shabby little uncarpeted office over a grocery store. Something was said about his first ancestor. He said, 'Well, my young friend, the first ancestor that I know anything about was one Tom Lincoln, who came over in 1634 and settled at a place, Hingham—or perhaps it was Hanghim. Which was it, judge?'

"From that we passed on to wildcat currency. Mr. Lincoln's story was that he was going down the Mississippi River on a steamboat, when the pilot announced to the captain that they were out of wood. The captain said: 'Well, put into the first woodpile.'

"The flat-bottomed boat was run up to the mud shore and the captain hailed a man who was walking among several piles of wood.

"'Will you sell your wood?' he shouted.

"'Yes,' came the reply.

"'For cash?'

"'Yes.'

"'Take wildcat currency?'

"'Certainly.'

"'Well, how will you take it?'

"The answer came back without hesitation, 'Cord for cord.'

"The judge mentioned that I had been telling him some curious stories I had heard from Custis, the adopted son of Washington, whom I had recently visited. Mr. Custis had said that Washington was the strongest man of his time, and that he had never been thrown in a wrestling match, although he had tried conclusions with professional wrestlers.

"'Well,' said Lincoln, 'do you know that is exactly my record. I have been against a good many men, and I never saw but one fellow that I couldn't throw on his back. That was a fellow named Jack Armstrong, strong as a Russian bear. I couldn't get him down, but, let me tell you, I took particularly good care that he didn't get me down, either.'

"A few days later I visited the president again with my brother-in-law, Senator Dixon, of Connecticut, and a constituent of his, who was six feet ten inches tall. Well, we met and for the first and perhaps the only time in his life, the president was flabbergasted by the sight of a man looking down on him by six inches.

"Finally his face was overspread by that lovely smile of his, and he said, 'My friend, will you permit me to ask you a question?'

"'Why, certainly, Mr. President,' the man answered.

"'I want to know,' said Mr. Lincoln, 'if you can tell when your feet get cold.'"

General Wilson digressed from Lincoln long enough to show to the audience a relic of Washington, which had recently come into his possession. It was a pair of sleeve links, which Washington had given to Benedict Arnold as a recognition of his gallant conduct at Saratoga. After Arnold had turned traitor he gave them to his only friend among the British officers, Colonel Tarleton. Colonel Tarleton, at the end of the war, gave them to his American secretary, who left them to his only son, Fitz-Greene Halleck, the poet, who on his death bequeathed them to his lawyer and executor, who now owns them.

Henry Clews gave a sketch of Lincoln's life. He was followed by David Homer Bates, manager of the war department telegraph office and cipher operator during the war. He said:

"I first met Abraham Lincoln in the war department telegraph office in 1861, having been called to Washington by a telegram from Andrew Carnegie, assistant general manager of military roads and telegraphs. From that day forward I met him daily when he came for news from the front. He did not always wait till telegrams were handed to him, but made the cipher room his lounging place, often watching over our shoulders as we were deciphering important messages from the army. He almost lived in the telegraph office when a battle was in progress, and on several notable occasions stayed with us all night long."

Both Mr. Bates and Mr. Tinker read from their war diaries the tributes they had written upon Lincoln the day following his assassination.

When Battling Nelson Earned Two Dollars.

Battling Nelson got two dollars for standing in front of Terry McGovern when the latter was at the zenith of his power and prestige. Terrible T. was traveling around the country and landed in Chicago. Billy Roach was managing a theater in Chicago. He was allowing two dollars a throw to ambitious youngsters to have the Brooklyn Harp toy with them for four rounds. Roach describes the McGovern-Nelson affair as follows: "Nelson stood up before Terry in three as fast rounds as I have ever seen. Terry didn't know how to play easy with a partner, and he went after Nelson from the tap of the bell. But Bat never flinched. He took a number of Mc-

Govern's wallops in good fashion, and also returned some of his own brand. No one thought that Nelson would become a champion. He was just like any number of lads hanging around Chicago. He was willing and eager to fight for almost anything. A square meal would have tempted him at times."

Lost to World for Four Years.

Lost to the world for four years in Australian wilds, sleeping out under the stars, camping wherever night overtook her, and playing heroine in a hundred adventures, Miss Marguerite Bellinger arrived in San Francisco recently after enough experiences to relate to satisfy an ordinary young woman for life.

But Miss Marguerite Bellinger is not an ordinary young woman. "Diana of Cobar" is what her fellow passengers styled her, as soon as she left Sydney.

The girl watched the docks of San Francisco draw near hugging to her breast the white poodle which had been the only companion for her and her mother during days at a time. Beside her stood six-year-old Louise Speeman, a maid born in Samoa who never saw a white man until a month or so ago, and doesn't yet believe that the ship moved. She thought it was the ocean, moving out from under the *Sonoma's* keel. She, too, was wondering with big eyes at San Francisco.

"Just think, they are all civilized, just like us!" laughed Miss Bellinger to the Samoan child, whose aunt, Mrs. Louise Speeman, was taking her to the United States for a bit of education.

"I've been in the brush so long," she added.

Accompanied by his wife and daughter, H. C. Bellinger, an Australian, who has amassed a fortune in copper mining, went four years ago to Cobar, in Central New South Wales, to take charge of a mine which his agents had failed to turn into a financial success.

Hunting possums, emus, and wallabies, riding, tramping, and camping, these two women hunted up adventure of all sorts in the "mallie scrub" of the wilderness. Miss Bellinger became a crack shot.

Except for blacksnakes and adders there was little to fear in the brush country. They refused to be daunted by the "bunyip" or strange spirit which the natives describe as a fearsome creature never yet seen by mortal.

"There would be weeks and weeks when we wouldn't see a single white man except father," Miss Bellinger said.

Few Football Changes.

Football, as played in 1912, needs no radical changes, as the game came closer to the ideal than in any previous season. Such was the feeling of the football rules committee, to which is assigned the annual task of making necessary changes, when the members gathered for its annual meeting. A few minor changes were made during a three-hour session, but the majority of the questions considered were allowed to remain as during the past season. The committee will meet again for a short session, but it was announced that only minor points are to be considered.

Edward K. Hall, of Dartmouth, was reëlected chairman of the committee, and Walter Camp, of Yale, was again named as secretary.

The question of numbering players so that spectators might know who is who on the football field called for the longest discussion of the session, but no definite rule was passed. The committee decided that in many ways such a rule would work a hardship, and closed the discussion by leaving the matter entirely to the different teams. To make a rule would necessitate the making of a penalty for nonobservance.

The propositions to lengthen the quarters from fifteen to twenty minutes, to move the goal posts back from the goal line so they would not interfere in any way with the team carrying the ball, and to eliminate the punt-out after a touchdown close to the side line were also discussed. In each case the committee decided that any change from the present rules would be inadvisable. It was also proposed to provide a rule for a fake forward pass when a player throws the ball to the ground to avoid being tackled, and have the ball returned to its starting place, and this also failed. The same fate met the proposition to make a five-yard penalty on an incompleted forward pass. A committee consisting of Messrs. Sheldon and Morice was appointed to draw up a new rule in regard to illegal shifting of players, the present one being considered ambiguous and faulty.

The principal change made in the rules removes the five-yard restriction on a kick, making it permissible to get away a speedy kick without going back five yards behind the line. It was voted to change the penalty of a player not reporting to the referee on entering the game from fifteen yards to five yards. The penalty for illegal return to the game was changed to disqualification and the loss of half the distance to the goal line. The obsolete rule about a center passing the ball, which read, "With a movement of the hands or of the foot," was changed, the section relating to the foot being stricken out.

An informal discussion on the results of 1912 brought out practically the same idea from all the rule makers that the game had been highly successful from a playing standpoint, and should be played on the same lines until some flagrant trouble is discovered.

Players Should Save Money.

"A baseball player ought to be at his best between thirty and thirty-five," said James R. McAleer, "and he ought to save $30,000 while in baseball."

The author of the aforesaid ought to be some authority on the subject, because he was playing the game about that age. Moreover, being chief mogul of the champions of the world, his observations concerning diamond athletes ought to carry weight.

If McAleer's remark is actually true, then baseball is unquestionably the best of all outdoor sports so far as the players thereof are concerned. In no other branch of athletics can a man, as a rule, stand the strain after, say, twenty-seven or twenty-eight, and nearly all of them begin to go back at about thirty. And how many men have saved $30,000 at the age of thirty-five?

"Of course, a man isn't so fast after thirty as he was before," added the Red Sox president, "but he has learned to think by that time, and he should be more valuable to his club after thirty than before, always provided he has taken care of himself."

McAleer has started a winter dispute already. Let's see what happens now that he has opened a little argument for the fans.

"Is a baseball player at his best between thirty and thirty-five?"

The Sox president made this remark during a conver-

sation in which he was asked how much he thought a big-league baseball player ought to save during his career on the diamond. McAleer put the figure at some $30,000. The average life of a ball player who takes care of himself in the big leagues is not much more than ten years. Most of them enter about twenty-two or thereabouts. A good player ought to make about $3,500 a year, an exceptionally good one more—up to from $5,000 to $7,000 or $8,000—after he becomes a star. There are many frugal ball players, and McAleer's figures must be based upon the ability of those fellows to save two-thirds or three-fourths of their baseball salaries, earning enough in winter to make up the balance of the cost of living.

A hustling ball player—one of the kind who go into the big leagues and stick—ought to make $40,000 or $50,000 during his career, even if he never participates in any world's series, and never becomes a star. McAleer's belief that he can save $30,000 is based upon the fact that a player's necessary expenses are slight in the playing season, and he ought to be able to make enough during the six months' lay-off to allow him to save two-thirds or three-fourths of his baseball season salary.

Dog Makes Arrest.

Attacked at night by ruffians in the Rue de Lancry, Paris, M. Jean Gabier, a shop employee, called his dog, which set upon the men and held one of them until the arrival of the police.

American Navy Short Five Thousand Men.

Stories are continually told to prove that the navy is very short of men and officers. It has even been asserted in Congress that Americans of the Middle West, especially the farming class, believe that the world is rushing toward "militarism," and that they prefer to "push the plow" instead of sailing the briny deep on one of Uncle Sam's warships.

Rear Admiral Philip Andrews, chief of the bureau of navigation of the navy department, takes exception to these oft-repeated assertions, and maintains that the navy to-day has more and better material to pick from than ever before.

"Considering the fact," said Admiral Andrews, "that nearly one-half of the nation's citizens eligible for enlistment have spent their lives far from the seaboard, and have but little conception of the meaning of the term, sea power, we have done remarkably well. Without doubt, we have exceeded every other nation operating the same policy of voluntary enlistments.

"The navy is now short about 5,000 men—between 9 and 10 per cent of its allowed strength. Recruiting is showing a decided gain, and despite the high wages and the scarcity of labor which have prevailed throughout the country for months past, the navy department has been able to appeal to a sufficiently large number of young men without lessening the standards as to the mental, moral, or physical requirements—which standards are the highest of any military service in the world.

"The personal equation is the greatest single factor in navy enlistments. We ask every recruit what it was that made him enlist in the navy. Invariably we get a reply that the service had been recommended to him by either an enlisted man or by a discharged enlisted man. This is the best recommendation that a service can have."

The shortage in the British navy, according to information gathered by the naval intelligence office, is about the same proportionately, as in the American navy. It is believed by experts here that Great Britain has much more difficulty in filling vacancies than the United States. They need a larger number of men, and the areas from which recruits have been drawn are practically exhausted.

"We are not at all worried about our prospects of filling up the navy's vacancies," continued Rear Admiral Andrews. "The fact of the matter is we are forced to turn down so many that our work is difficult."

Statistics at the navy enlistment office show that but about one out of every six applicants is qualified for a navy enlistment. The slightest physical defect, the smallest blemish on his character, any indication that he uses alcohol forever bars a man from the navy.

In the old days the navy was used as a sort of dumping ground for worthless boys on the belief that the service "would make a man of him."

These days are past and gone forever. If one does not believe it—send a worthless youngster to a navy recruiting office.

Whether masts and sails are a necessary part of an efficient science of naval training is a question which at present is troubling the minds of European admirals. The Italian government has ordered six rigged vessels for training duties. They will be three-masted, rigged fore and aft, and have internal-combustion engines. They will be built light and unarmed. They are inexpensive and contemplated for no other purpose than to teach new recruits good old-fashioned seamanship.

"The Italian government," said a well-known admiral recently, "is not prone to waste money; so these ships must be designed to meet a special condition."

Ocean Discloses Old Church Ruins.

After 308 years the ancient church and churchyard at Eeles, Norfolk, have been given up by the sea.

Many years ago that church and a village of sixty-six houses stood at some distance from the sea, but the waves gradually encroached on the land and in 1604 2,000 acres of land were overwhelmed. All the inhabitants were drowned, and only the tower of the church remained visible.

During the recent gale an extraordinary scouring of the beach removed every particle of the tons of sand covering the church and churchyard. The action of the waves has so worn away the earth that the bottoms of the graves are now level with the surface, their shapes being plainly discernible in the solid clay.

On one day no fewer than thirty-six skeletons were exposed, one of which had the arms crossed on the breast. In the ruined church a bronze key and escutcheon were found. They were believed to belong to the church chest.

The tower stood until quite recently, but was then destroyed. The sand is now returning again and the sea is taking back what it had given up for a few days.

Police Dogs Used in Paris Streets.

A series of burglaries in the center of Paris has led to the creation of a special force of private police or night guards. Their special attention is directed to guarding the property of citizens who have subscribed toward the Night Guards Association.

The Avenue de l'Opera and the adjacent streets are patrolled by a dozen stalwart guards in a blue uniform

with a quaint helmet. Each guard has a police dog and a heavy automatic pistol. The inspector had with him a magnificent black German sheep dog, which was muzzled and held on leash.

All the dogs had been especially trained for their work. "Just lay a hand on me and see what the dog will do," said a guard. I gave him a hearty blow in the chest. With a low growl the great black dog at his side sprang at my throat. His master pulled him off.

The scheme is in its infancy, but it is hoped before long to establish patrols in the residential districts of Paris. Subscribers may hire a guard at night to summon a doctor or a cab.

England Losing Trade.

A Lisbon dispatch to the London *Times* says that, owing to the absence of a commercial treaty between Great Britain and Portugal, British trade with the republic and its colonies is declining considerably, and is going to Germans and Americans, who, for instance, have captured the trade in tools and cutlery which was formerly entirely in British hands.

The British chamber of commerce at Lisbon has handed the British minister a memorandum emphasizing the danger, and requesting him to forward it to the foreign office.

For Ending Death Penalty.

A bill was introduced into the Illinois State Senate recently to abolish capital punishment and substitute the penalty of life imprisonment and a fine not to exceed $25,000, to be worked out at the rate of $1 a day, the proceeds to be devoted to the maintenance of the dependent wives and the children of the victims.

Saved Doll; Died Herself.

Little seven-year-old Mattie Cooper was burned to death when she attempted to save her doll from the fire that destroyed her home at Cadiz, Ky. Her father had rescued her and several other children, but the girl rushed back, crying:

"I forgot my dolly!"

Recruits for England's Army and Navy Scarce.

English recruiting officers are cursing the disloyal tendencies of the times which make their occupation, which used to be so comfortable, a very strenuous one. They cannot get the necessary number of recruits for his majesty's army and navy. Nobody stops to look at the beautiful posters of fine-looking, smiling and well-nourished soldiers, in bright crimson and scarlet, or jolly sailors and marines in navy blue, except dreaming nursemaids and little boys.

One effect is that the recruiting in the east is always slack, and another is that only wasted, hungry, and despairing applicants come along. Most of them are capable of great improvement, but the quality is poor.

The politicians behind the Welsh disestablishment bill are determined to see that there is no recurrence of the scandals which arose under similar circumstances in regard to the compensation of curates between 1869, the date of the passing of the measure of disestablishment of the church in Ireland, and 1871 when the act came into operation.

It was for this reason that a recent Tory amendment to the bill was defeated. Mr. Asquith the other day referred to what took place in Ireland.

"There was an extraordinary and unprecedented multiplication of curates," he said. "Never had the history of the country been so prolific in the production of curates. The number rose between 1869 and 1871—less than two years—from 563 to 921. That was the first stage in the history of the transaction. These 921 permanent curates all obtained compensation under the act upon the footing that they were entitled, so long as they discharged spiritual duties in Ireland, to continue to receive an annuity equal to the income they were receiving at the date of disestablishment."

There are 561 curates in Wales, and under the Welsh disestablishment bill these will be taken care of, but it is not the intention of the liberal government to provide life annuities to everybody who becomes a minister in Wales obviously for the purpose of getting an income from the state in return for which he does absolutely no work of any kind.

Foot Baseball the Latest.

Baseball may soon be an all-year-round sport, for you can now play it with a football. The new friend of the magnate and the professional players' nemesis is Professor Bonscoter, of the Wilkes-Barre High School. As inventor of the new game he explains it as follows:

"A baseball cannot be easily held by players in cold weather; hence the need of a game with the larger, clumsier football. It is played on a baseball diamond with the same number of players on a side, the most notable difference being that there is no pitcher, this player occupying the position of another shortstop—'right shortstop'—between first and second.

"The ball is put into play by being kicked from home plate, and the runner hikes for first, as in baseball, and is put out by the passing of the ball to first ahead of him, as in baseball, or being touched by it in the hands of a player.

"The runner may not advance from a base when the ball has not been passed to the baseman, who touches the base while the runner is there. This disbars the runner from advancing from the base till the ball has been kicked out again. It also debars any runner back of him. The kick may be of any sort—place, punt, or drop kick. The runner may be declared out if he advances from the base before the ball is kicked out. If the ball is kicked foul the kicker is out. He is also out if he fails in an attempt to kick.

"The game is very lively, being full of constant kicking, running, catching, and passing. It develops strength, speed, accuracy, skill, and with less liability to accidents, even than in baseball on account of the freedom from the chance of being injured by a pitcher or batted ball."

Royalty Expensive at Henley Regatta.

According to the report of the committee on management of last year's Henley regatta on the Thames, the presence of royalty was the cause of much extra expense, but all of it was met by subscription and in other ways, the balance in the treasury was increased by nearly $4,000 to $8,785. The added cost of the regatta this year was $6,735, the total expenses of the four days being $17,655, while the receipts were $21,475.

In 1911 the spectators in boats were invited to help with the expenses by the purchase of subscribers' flags, and last

year's subscribers' badges were also sold. The sale netted $4,200, and the expenses connected therewith were $1,825, which left a net profit to the rowing fund of $2,375. The kinemacolor company paid $500 for picture taking, and $8,-540 was given and subscribed.

From this it can be seen that regattas are as expensive in England as in America, and it is not thought unbecoming to accept money from the railway companies, even though they have no observation trains.

Points on Light.

A piece of camphor placed in the well of an oil lamp ensures a more brilliant light.

New chimney glasses should be placed in cold soap-suds, and boiled slowly. This prevents them cracking.

The char on wicks should be rubbed off with soft tissue paper, the wick being turned down until an eighth of an inch only is above the burner. Scissors should never be used, once a wick has been evenly trimmed.

Lamps should not be continually refilled with the remains of previous fillings left in. Pour that out, and keep for other purposes.

Whatever receptacle kerosene is stored in should be absolutely airtight. Kerosene absorbs and evaporates, and both processes lessen its power.

A small piece of white wood, about the size of a florin, with a little arm left, if placed in the oil well, will rise when the oil is poured in, and can easily be observed as it swirls around. This prevents the danger of overfilling a lamp.

Burning Coal Field.

What is described as a burning coal field has been discovered at Haselbach, in the Duchy of Altenburg. Engineers declare that the fire beneath the ground has been going on for years. Mysterious fissures appeared beneath a factory and shafts were sunk. At a depth of eighteen feet seams of blazing coal were encountered.

Stanford Team Won't Come East.

It has been decided that Stanford University could not accept the invitation of the University of Pennsylvania Athletic Association to send a relay team to the nineteenth annual relay carnival, which will be held in Philadelphia April 19.

The Eastern event will come but one week after the Stanford-California track meet, which will make it impossible for the Stanford men to go East. In the special classification of colleges for the meet, Stanford was grouped with Chicago, Michigan, Illinois, Missouri, Wisconsin, and California.

Scheme for a One-million-dollar Baseball School.

A baseball school, backed with capital to the extent of $1,000,000 and conducted along lines decidedly novel, is a possibility of the near future. Charley Carr, at one time a member of the Detroit team, and during the past few years connected with various American Association teams as manager, evolved the idea and will soon put the matter up to the national commission for a sanction. Carr has interested several wealthy men in the project and will have unlimited backing in his efforts to make the school a success.

The plan proposed would be a benefit to veterans and novices alike. Carr proposes to secure one big hotel in the South with grounds large enough for fifteen or twenty diamonds where all the major-league clubs can train in the spring. The idea of the promoter is to have organized baseball stand behind the plan, and inducements will be offered to have all the clubs establish training quarters at the same place.

When the major-league teams go North to begin their regular playing season the school will be at the disposal of minor leaguers or youngsters desiring to get a knowledge of the finer points of the game. A skilled corps of professors, such as are employed at all institutions of learning, will teach the youngsters what they have learned through years of experience on the diamond. Former major leaguers, who have been noted for their knowledge of the game, will be secured as teachers. A regular tuition fee will be charged, and classes conducted in the usual way. The large number of playing fields will also permit of much individual instruction.

Carr figures that there is a great field for such an institution to fit natural-born ball players for professional careers, and he figures that a single training camp would eliminate considerable of the expense of training, and be of much greater service to major leaguers. It is planned to open the school next October if organized ball will sanction the idea.

New Monuments in Servia.

As a result of the Bulgarian-Turco War, Servian towns are being dotted with strange wooden monuments erected to the nation's fallen heroes.

Throughout Servia and the Balkan kingdoms the custom has long prevailed among the peasantry of thus honoring their relatives slain in war. The monument, usually carved out of a single block of wood, represents in bas-relief the soldier whose death it commemorates. They are usually put up near the soldier's home or near the spot where he fell, if the spot happens to be in his native country.

As the Servian heroes are falling in the enemy's territory, the monuments are necessarily raised in their homes, and very few farms are to be found to-day in which one, at least, of these crude carvings is not to be found.

They are usually painted in vivid reds and blues. Above the head of the wooden figure is an inscription giving the soldier's name, and sometimes a few details of the manner in which he met his death.

Prussian Incomes Generally Small.

The Prussian income-tax figures just published show that 88 2-3 per cent of all the inhabitants earn less than $750 yearly; only 8 1-5 per cent reach $1,375; 310 taxpayers paid taxes on incomes of more than $125,000, and 87 declared incomes of more than $250,000.

The figures show only trifling changes from the preceding year, apparently indicating no important rise in wages or salaries.

Bathtub Trust is Fined Fifty Thousand Dollars.

Fines aggregating about $50,000 were imposed recently upon members of the Bathtub Trust, convicted under the Sherman antitrust law. Leaders in the formation of the conspiracy escaped sentences only by the fact that Theodore Ahrens, of Pittsburgh, president of the Standard Sanitary Manufacturing Company, had been dismissed in a former trial. The fines ranged from $5,000 to nominal fines of $1.

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We give herewith a list of all the back numbers in print. You can have your news dealer order them or they will be sent direct by the publishers to any address upon receipt of the price in money or postage stamps.

620—The Fatal Javelin.
621—The Ghost of Nick Carter.
622—A Strange Coincidence.
623—Pauline—A Mystery.
624—A Woman of Plots.
625—A Millionaire Swindler.
626—The Money Schemers.
627—On the Trail of the Moon.
628—The House of Mystery.
629—The Disappearance of Monsieur Gereaux.
630—An Heiress to Millions.
631—The Man in the Biograph.
632—The Time-lock Puzzle.
633—The Moving Picture Mystery.
634—The Tiger-tamer.
635—A Strange Bargain.
636—The Haunted Circus.
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638—A Mental Mystery.
639—The Sealed Envelope.
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647—The Great Diamond Syndicate.
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649—The Triangle Clue.
650—The Hollingsworth Puzzle.
651—The Affair of the Missing Bonds.
652—The Green Box Clue.
653—The Taxi-cab Mystery.
654—The Mystery of a Hotel Room.
655—The Tragedy of the Well.
656—The Black Hand.
657—The Black Hand Nemesis.
658—A Masterly Trick.
659—A Dangerous Man.
660—Castor, the Poisoner.
661—The Castor Riddle.
662—A Tragedy of the Bowery.
663—Four Scraps of Paper.
664—The Secret of the Mine.
665—The Dead Man in the Car.
666—Nick Carter's Master Struggle.
667—The Air-shaft Specter.
668—The Broken Latch.
669—Nick Carter's Sudden Peril.
670—The Man with the Missing Thumb.
671—Feltman, the "Fence."
672—A Night with Nick Carter.
673—In the Nick of Time.
674—The Dictator's Treasure.
675—Pieces of Eight.
676—Behind the Mask.
677—The Green Patch.
678—The Drab Thread.
679—The Live-wire Clue.
680—The Vampires of the Tenement.
681—The Policy King Baffled.
682—The Madman's Gig.
683—A Life at Stake.
684—Trailing a Scarlet Thread.
685—The Crimson Flash.
686—A Puzzle of Identities.
687—The Westervelt Option.
688—The Vanishing Heiress.
689—The Birth of a Mystery.
690—A Clue from the Past.
691—The Red Triangle.
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